

A
MARVEL
MONTHLY

SCIENCE FANTASY IN TV, CINEMA AND GRAPHICS

№24 60p

STARBURST

**SPECIAL STAR-PACKED
ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!**

featuring

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH
CAROLINE MUNRO
THE FIRST LADY OF FANTASY

STAR WARS STAR SPEAKS!
MARK HAMILL
ON THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN
REVIEW OF THE NEW KIRK
DOUGLAS TIME-TRAVEL MOVIE

**GERRY ANDERSON'S
STINGRAY**

FEATURE PLUS INTERVIEW WITH
PRODUCER, REG HILL

plus

FANTASY MOVIE NEWS DIRECT
FROM THE CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

A SPECIAL ALFRED HITCHCOCK
RETROSPECTIVE

PIN-UPS OF CAROLINE MUNRO
& MARK HAMILL

AND A BONUS SF MOVIE POSTER



CAROLINE MUNRO

KIRK DOUGLAS

MARK HAMILL



**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
WITH CAROLINE MUNRO**

A REVEALING INTERVIEW
WITH THE FIRST LADY OF
FANTASY, PLUS A FULL
COLOUR PIN-UP... SEE
PAGE 30.



THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

A DOUBLE REVIEW OF A
NEW TIME TRAVEL MOVIE
STARRING KIRK DOUGLAS
AND MARTIN SHEEN. SEE
PAGE 12.



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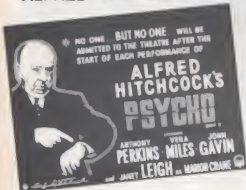
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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of Starburst is something of a landmark for British fantasy magazines. It is the first of its kind to make it past the 23 issue mark. The late, lamented *House of Hammer* lasted 23 issues, *Monster Mag* ran 17 issues and poor old *TV Sci Fi Monthly* only appeared 8 times. Not forgetting such one and two issue wonders as the various licenced tie-in poster mags and other related phenomena.

This issue is also the end of volume two. Which must be some justification for celebrating. Now, two years eight months and two volumes later we're still in business.

Starting next issue, Volume 3 Number 1, we plan to shift emphasis slightly to try to give coverage to a wider range of fantasy in a broader spectrum of media.

I won't take up any more room in your column, other than to remind you that we at Starburst are always interested in your comments, criticisms, opinions and requests. Write soon.

Alan McKenzia,
Starburst.

THE INVISIBLE RAY

Nica to see an article about The Invisible Ray in Starburst 22. However, the picture on page 22 (top left) of Karloff in glasses does not come from this film, surely. He wore similar specs and hairstyles in *Before I Hang and Night Kay*.

C. Davis,
London W6.

Phil Edwards replies: "The photograph was not from the *Invisible Ray*. The British Film Institute agreed and suggested that the photo was a publicity tie-in picture supplied by Universal at

PIN-UP FAN MALE

With reference to your comment about suggestions for a fantasy male feature, Paul Darrow as Avon is definitely the most fantastic, carbon-based unit in the galaxy!

Anna Barret,
Carlisle.

Since there have been so many ardent Paul Darrow fans asking for pictures of him, surely you could supply us all with one more large colour photograph in a future issue of your magazine. Or why not include him in a *Starburst Fantasy Male* feature.

Incidentally, we were all relieved to hear that the rumoured end of Blake's 7 turned out to be untrue.

Jayne Thomas,
Dabbie and Julia Adlington,
Blackpool.

Having read the comments in *Starburst 22 re: Fantasy Males* I would like to give my personal nominations.

They are: Harrison Ford, Leonard Nimoy, Mark Hamill, Gregory Harrison, Tom Baker,



Randy Powell, Frank Langella, Christopher Lee, Steve Reeves and David McCallum.

These are just a few. I am one female who knows what she likes. Not everybody's choice, I know.

I hope you get a good response from other female readers. And just to show I am not biased, why did you not include Joanna (Sapphire) Lumley in the lovely ladies lineup (*Starburst 20*)?

Janda-Lee Davies,
Clacton-on-Sea,
Essex.

We did, Janda-Lee. On page 33 in her *New Avengers* role of Purdy. See, you should have been paying attention! But aside from that, we would like to extend our thanks to all the ladies who nominated their own favourite fantasy males. (As you'll probably know by now we have included an autographed colour pin-up of Mark Hamill in this very issue of *Starburst*! All we have to do is to get the photos together (easy) and convince Antonia Crawley or Jane Brasnan to write the feature (not-so-easy)! Stay Tuned.

the time. The reason it was included in the article was purely for its curiosity value. The picture was taken by the German photographer Freulich, but unfortunately space did not permit a full explanation with the article."



BRITISH TELEVISION SF

British television science fiction is beginning to drive me nuts!

I know their intentions are good and budgets limited, but I still can't understand why nobody's hit on the perfect combination before now, considering how so many have tried.

We had *Space: 1999*, lavish on impressive visuals, but lifeless in characterization. We had *UFO*, much better than *Space*, but still suffering the influence of cardboard characters. Also there was

the spectacular Gerry Anderson puppet epics such as *Thunderbirds*. And the puppets, in my opinion, generated more life than the whole cast of *Space: 1999* put together.

And then of course there's *Dr Who* and *Blake's 7*.

Well, I used to be an avid fan of the good Doctor and I still think that Tom Baker's portrayal is the best yet. But for me the show seems to have lost its flavour.

As for *Blake*. The characters are all good (especially Avon), but the standard of effects are generally pretty unimpressive and repetitive. Okay, so the BBC haven't the time or the money to waste on such things. But science fiction has proved its popularity over and over again. And so it is

BATTLESTAR RULES!

I am writing to complain about the critic who wrote about the forthcoming *Battlestar Galactica* film. He had no right to say that on most readers minds is the question: will it be as awful as the last film. I saw *Battlestar Galactica* and thought it was one of the best sci-fi movies since *Star Wars*. I will be going to see *Mission Galactica: The Cylon Attack*. I also happen to know that a group of my friends are in the same mind as me — disgusted by your critic just because he doesn't like it doesn't mean to say that nobody else does.

Please could you explain how I read in a magazine that the series won the top tv programme award and Dirk Benedict (*Li Starbuck*) and Lauretta Spreng (*Cassiopea*) won top up-and-coming actor and actress award.

Please would you tell me if there is a *Battlestar Galactica* fan club as I would love to join.

Cherie Wingfield,
London SE24.

Your letter gives us an opportunity to clarify Starburst's position over critical reviews, Cherie. Firstly, our critic on that occasion

(Alan Murdoch, for those readers who like to keep a score card) had every right to voice his opinions of the Battlestar series, just as you have every right to air your views on his report. Unlike our American competitors, who seem reluctant to admit that the film industry does occasionally produce duffers, we believe we have a duty to inform and enlighten. And if that means we also have to warn our readers of films that could prove disappointing then we will do so.

If you disagree with our critic over a certain film (though it does puzzle us how you can disagree over a film that, by your own admission, you haven't yet seen) then that is your prerogative. Often we will give space to our readers so that they can make their feelings public. Don't see how we can be fairer than that.

We can't explain how you came to read in a magazine that Battlestar won all those awards. But the nature of such awards must be suspect when Battlestar Galactica was cancelled on US television, revamped as Galactica 1980 then cancelled again. Quality is occasionally cancelled once, but rarely twice.

And as far as we know, there is no official Battlestar fan club, but perhaps our readers know different?

beyond me why there has not yet been a truly great science fiction series from our country. I feel that we have a mature approach to the genre and given the financial support could create a superb show, perhaps in the mould of those marvellous Quatermass episodes of old.

After all, our special effects experts are in demand all over the world. And I often think that *Star Wars* and the excellent *Superman* movie would only have been half as impressive if not for our lads. Thanks for reading.

Stephen Woodward,
Telford,
Salop.

This month, Steve, you can have your chance to vote for your favourite tv shows. Just turn to page 48 and fill in the form!



MISSION LACKLUSTRE

I'm writing to say I really like *Battlestar Galactica*, so you can imagine my delight when *Mission Galactica: The Cylon Attack* arrived in Kowloon when I was working there. Off I dutifully trooped to brave a Chinese cinema (the local Chinese have some nastier habits than London punks).

To sum up, my opinion of *Mission Galactica* — well, to put it nicely it's a huge ripoff!

There are quite a few scenes in *Mission* which are obviously from *Battlestar*, the story is really poor and the ending so rushed that, even after the credits, you are still waiting for the rest of the film.

If the person who wrote the *Mission Galactica* report thought *Battlestar* was bad, I can assure you that *Mission* is ten times worse!

Ann O'Neill SRN,
London SE18.

MAT IS CARPETED!

I am a recent addict to *Starburst*, congratulations. I was interested by the article *Irvine on Effects: The Art of Design in Starburst 22*. Unfortunately, I feel obliged to correct you on one major point. The Titan 2 rocket used for launching America's Gemini Spacecraft was not a solid propellant rocket. It was a two stage liquid propellant booster powered by three engines (two in the first stage and one in the second stage) consuming as fuel Unsymmetrical Dimethyl Hydrazine (UDMH) and Nitrogen Tetroxide as an oxidiser.

Keep up the good work.

P.V. Haviland,
Lichfield,
Staffs.

Mat pleads temporary amnesia on this point, P.V. Your letter sent him scurrying for his library to see how he could possibly have committed such a faux pas (Mat? come out of there! He says he's sorry!!)

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THINGS TO COME

CANNES 33

Minus any hefty kick in the slats by Coppola this year, it was a far from scintillating 33rd festival here in Cannes. Overall mood matched the weather. Cold. Drizzly. Lousy. High spots were the new works from the proven masters of film: Fellini, Fosse, Resnais, Godard, and better than all of them at 70, Akira Kurosawa. Low spots were most of the rest of the dullard happenings. On-screen and off. Quite fun though, to see West German star Udo Kier — Andy Warhol's Frankenstein one time — strolling around with a shaven head and full moustache, looking for all the world like the potential star of *I Was a Teenage Von Stroheim*.

But first, the bad news: hardly any science fiction and/or fantasy in sight. And "in sight" at Cannes means as much on billboards for announced films, as actual films on screen or cassette. A little — but not a lot. Maybe the old Empire Striking Back will bring about a change. The good news, if you're that way inclined in the opened-ended fantasy market, was a major increase in the amount of horror orientated movies, both schlock and otherwise — *The Shining* has caused that, I'll be bound.

CRONENBERG

Although — or because — he said not a word about it to Phil Edwards in *Starburst 22*, Canada's David Cronenberg provided the big surprise in the project stakes. Once his *Scanners* is out taking care of business in the cinemas, David will be directing his version of *Frankenstein*. "A contemporary vision of a timeless, chilling tale," say his producers Pierre David, Victor Solnicki and Claude Heroux of Filmpen International (the *Scanners* backers). They also touted it as "a major cinematic event", which it quite well could be. Much the same, after all, was said when Kan Russell announced *Dracula* here, same place, same mid-festival time, last year. And look what happened to that. Zilch. But I shouldn't think that way... as Cronenberg's *Scanners*' hype says: Thoughts can kill...

SOUL BROTHER

Free at last, free at last from his tv Hutch, David Soul sped into Cannes from Grace Kelly country and is shooting Fox's new tv cabaret series, *The Monte Carlo Show*, for a Sunn-Classic and Serendipity brunch on the Carlton beach — on "Sunn-O" as my invitee had it. Not that the singer-cum-actor-cum-singer seemed to know just where he was. Or why. The reason was his starring role in Stephen King's *Salem's Lot*. Except he didn't seem too interested when I asked him about it. Could be that he and I, alone among the munchers and guzzlers, knew

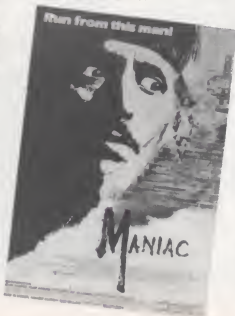
PLAYMATE IN OUTER SPACE

On the space fantasy front — and I do mean front — most of the hype mileage this year was taken up by producer Marilyn Tanser's *Galaxina*. The leading lady in this robotic-Barbarella yarn, Dorothy Stratten, Vancouver's pride and joy, has just been elected *Playboy's* Playmate of the Year. Dotty's a *Playboy* discovery, in fact, and leapt into movies soon after her arrival in LA for camera and no doubt Hugh Hefnar tests. She's around soon in such films as *Americanthor*, *Skatetown USA* and *Canada's Autumn Born*, plus passing through (and now by) all the usual tv guest-slots in *Fantasy Island* and *Buck Rogers* in the 25th Century. Even without a full year of *Playboy* global publicity touring ahead of her, darling Dotty is doing her bit in promoting her space flick. Back home in LA, her car's licence plate reads: GAL X INA.

Shall I, shan't I...? Well why not? Here's one shot of the strapping Stratten. With the promise of more to come, when I write the upcoming preview on her *Galaxina* trip into the 28th Century, where writer-director William Sachs tells me, "Man finally creates a machine. With feelings." For the moment, Ms *Galaxina* is still being billed by Marilyn and Crown International as Dorothy R. Stratten. Now she's the best bunny in bunnyland, I suspect the "R" will go. In case Americans mistake it for the censor-rating on the movie...



that the truncated movie-release version won't get to Britain. We're getting the full, four-hour tv mini-series instead. What little Soul did have to say is also reserved for later and another *Starburst Special Preview*...



CAROLINE (EEK) MUNRO

More talkative — more beautiful, too — was tasty Caroline Munro, in with hubby Judd Hamilton for the unveiling of their first US production, *Maniac*. This one is definitely not recommended after a full dinner. Or any other kind of meal. Blood flows like the champagne around here at fest time. Heads literally roll including that of Caroline's co-star, writer and producer Joe Spinell... who sculps his victims having wasted them with swords, knives, shotguns and other assorted weaponry. Nice fellow!

I watched the premiere screening with Caroline and Judd. That is to say, I watched it. Like most other folk in the crowded Regent cinema, they hid their heads more than once. But for rather different reasons. I got the impression they weren't too pleased with the result. It's far from the way they wanted the script to pan out — some scenes seemed to be missing entirely. Half the audience blanched, made their excuses and left, hands over mouths. (Well, the Regent has such smart white seats). But wouldn't you know it, vast queues of buyers were waiting for the exec producers (Spinell and Judd) next

morning. Judd was somewhat bleary-eyed at the time. After the midnight "screaming", he couldn't sleep. In truth, it's a very sick movie. But not the sickest on offer...

BLOOD & GORE

Japan's Telecas combine had a simply horrid item on show called *Faces of Death*. Which is more or less just that... documentary style. But even *Maniac's* hand-pumped ketchup fountains could hardly compete with Joe D'Amato's *Anthrophagous*... The Poster depicts some madmen who looks not unlike the final stages of Howard Hughes... eating his own intestines.

A case, said Cronenberg's current British distributor Stan Long, of: Eet your heart out, George Romero. True enough, George started this current habit in soaking screens in blood. Now they're all at it with *Zombies Here*, *Zombies There*, and in Italy, *Zombies Everywhere*.

ROMERO MAN

Incidentally, the gruesome decapitations and stuff -- not forgetting one rising headless body -- in *Caroline's Maniac* were carried out by Romero's main -- or indeed, main -- effects man, Tom Savini. He sure loves his work. He even blew his own head off in one scene. Tom plays the gent parked in a *Lovers' Lane* area who gets blown to smithereens by Joe Spinell's shotgun.

Now Tom has one of the leading roles in Romero's new movie -- his first to be released by a major distributor in America, United Artists. This is the one I mentioned here... oh, light years ago... All about motor-cycle knights, jousting in full medieval armour on their Yamaha or whatever. George used to call the film *Knights*. But somehow John Boorman beat him to registering the title and is now calling his Merlin project in Ireland, *Knights* -- so who knows what poor Ridley Scott will now call his *Knight* for EMI? George, meantime, is

now registering the title *Knightriders*.

Co-starring with Tom Savini are Jed Herrer, an LA actor from the new *Charlie Bronson* film, *Borderline*. He plays Billy, the king or head-honcho of the bikers. Also cast, New York actors Gary Lehti, Amy Ingersoll and Petricie Tallman, plus Christina Forrest from Romero (and Savini) country. Let's hear it then for...

THE CARPENTERS

In from the Coast -- but not for too long together -- were director extraordinary John Carpenter and his beautiful actress wife, Adrienne Barbeau. They also had Jamie Lee Curtis along for the ride, so you don't need me to tell you they were busily promoting *The Fog*. They didn't show it, alas. They didn't need to. Most of Europe has been playing it for weeks and John, for one, was astonished to hear it hadn't opened here yet.

Within a few days, Adrienne had to leave him at the posh Hotel Mejeistic and jet back to George where she's going the action route this once in Hel Needham's new fast-mover, *Cannonball*, with Burt Reynolds, Roger Moore, Ferrah Fawcett, Dom DeLuise and, or so I heard, Sammy Davis.

This left John with plenty of time to talk turkey with distributors and sense with journalists -- yes, yes, again that's all to come. (This column is beginning to read like a trailer for future issues). John has a fistful of projects including his EMI Western, *El Diablo*, delayed by the time he spent on *The Fog*. "It's the first time I've gone back and re-shot scenes," he commented. Prize among his projects is his most expensive film to day ("by necessity, not by design"), *Escape from New York*. This one is set in 1997 when New York is the world's largest prison. I always thought it already was...

Adrienne Barbeau will be among the cast but not, on this occasion, Jamie Lee...

A TRIO OF HORRORS FROM THE CANNON GROUP

Cannon Fodder. Examples of the better posters for each of the market films from the Cannon Group, an LA exploitation company taken over last year by the Israeli producers Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus -- just saturating Cannes this year with films and poster-art. The *Godsend* is a British production, directed by Gabrielle Beaumont from her actor-husband Olf Pooley's spooky

script -- and she's hardly Britain's first women director as Cannon claims. Klaus Kinski's *Murder by Mail* is covered elsewhere in this column. As for *Dracula's Last Rites*, what can one say about a film that was originally called simply *Last Rites*... Colin Wilson's *Space Vampires* was first announced by Cannon at Cannes last year -- but they're still promising it.



MS CURTIS

She's a honey. A long, tall, pipe-cleaner of a lady. Jamie Lee Curtis, that's who. As (again) you'll find out when we've the room for the full interview. Chased by photographers who politely enquired if they'd found the right girl

THINGS TO COME

— "la fille du Tony Curtis, oui?" — Jamie is similarly booked up from here to the rest of the year. Since *The Fog*, she's finished *Prom Night*, only now it's called *Terror Train* — and pretty good, too, from the passage I caught on a cassette. Then, she too had to run back home to the States to start *Road Games* with Stacy Keach. "Not a horror film for once," she said with obvious pleasure. "Don't get me wrong, I love making horror films. Just love it. But this one is more like *Bogie and Bacall* on the road." On top of which, Jamie has lately formed a film company with her stockbroker sister, Kelly, and their mother, Janet Leigh. And from her guarded comments about their plans, that combine is looking pretty good, too.

HORROR INC

Also available in excerpted form — they call them promo-reels, by the way — was *Fade to Black*, from producer George G. Brunstein and Ron Hemmady, who this time last year were pushing their real-life China Syndrome chiller, *The Prometheus Crisis*, to be directed by Carpenter. That one never happened. As George told me recently in L.A., Carpenter just upped and walked away from it because of his new Avo Embassy and EMI deals. But as John Carpenter told it at Cannes, he walked away when he found there wasn't any money. "They've got my script though," he added. "They paid for that — and perhaps they'll make it."

Maybe they'll get the money now. Because *Fade to Black*, with Irwin Yablens doing a great job on the selling, is a winner. The Breezing Away star Dennis Christopher is the movie buff who begins knocking off people



in re-enactments of his favourite movie murders. He pushes his aunt downstairs in a wheelchair like Richard Widmark in *Kiss of Death* (1947). He dresses as Dracula and drinks the blood of another victim. He gives his boss a heart attack when disguised as The Mummy. And all because the lady loves him not — Linda Kerridge, who looks more like Marilyn than Marilyn. She becomes the decoy when the police trap "The Celluloid Killer" and he topples from the top of the Mann's Chinese Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard, slap into the forecourt among the footprints of the movie stars he reveres so much. A neat chiller, well told and particularly well acted by young Christopher... Or at least, it was in the lively portion I saw. No wonder the buyers were all around Yablens and Alex Beck.

LEISURE INC



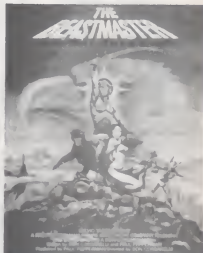
New combine lookin' good at its first Cannes was L.A.'s Leisure Investment Company, part-backers of the great *Fade To Black* — and into some intriguing trips of their own. Phantasm's Don Coscarelli, for instance, is making *The Beastmaster*, for them, a sword and sorcery number, set in a remote primitive society beset by sorcerers and barbarian hordes. Coscarelli's hero is a young man with psychic rapport with wild animals... But first before the cameras is *Evilseek*, from Eric Weston, well versed in all aspects of film-making: an ex-actor, cinematographer, casting director, sometimes producer and documentary director now into features. His subject is the mis-use of home computer terminals — using them to invoke the Devil, no less.

"The star of the film," says executive producer Sylvio Tebet, "is the story by Joseph Garofalo. The hero is a kid who's the butt of his classmates and gets back at the little devils with a very real Devil of his own." Aha...!

CONAN IS GO!

Conan's Coming. Yes but when...? The poster is signed by Frank Frazetta and copyrighted 1974. (probably because it is taken from the cover of the 1974 Lancer paperback *Conan the Adventurer*) The film title (merchandising and hype) is now officially copyrighted by Dino De Laurentiis' corporation, circa 1980. John Milius has been back and forth as the project's director, then writer, then writer-director, then maybe producer, and now director again... and Arnold Schwarzenegger has stayed with it all this time, studying acting until his pectorals ahead. Still no definite news, though, of a starting date for Conan no longer, it seems The Barbarian. Don't say Dino is sanitizing Conan too, after *Flesh Gordon*...

BEASTMASTER



Sorcery. First he made *Phantasm* which defied belief, or at least understanding.

Then came *Phantasm II*. Now Don Coscarelli is moving into the realms of space 'n' sorcery with *The Beastmaster* — another of the first Leisure Investment Company movies — written by Don and his producer, Paul Peppermen...

FLOYD'S(a) SLEEP

Three years ago, expatriate American film-director Calvin Floyd was here with his Swedish-Irish film of Victor Frankenstein. He's been living in Sweden since 1964, and was due to start his next film later that '77 year based on Sheridan Le Fanu's *The Room at the Flying Dragon*. No sight of it in '78. Nor indeed last year. It appeared to be yet another of those Cannes-announced movies that never made it

DR OLLY

Various top stars couldn't — simply didn't bother to — make it to the Cannes circus this year. Marvin, Lancaster, Coburn, Jackie Bisset were chief among the no-shows. Oliver Reed, at least, had a better excuse. He was busy elsewhere in Europe shooting Condorman with Michael Crawford for Disney. Or then again, maybe he'd seen his obviously rushed Hollywood debut film for the unspeakable Cannon Group — *Dr Heckyl and Mr Hype*.

The movie is not *quite* as rotten as its publicity. Cannon are renowned down here for using every parked car along the Croisette as its own billboard. This year they went too far — and produced two posters and/or ads for each film, which just meant more waste-paper than ever before. On the Press Floor in the Palais, where such handouts are left in our mail-type boxes, you could be ankle deep in Cannon-fodder chucked away by disinterested journalists.



Altered Ego. Oliver Reed, a memorable Hammer werewolf in his time, tries the R. L. Stevenson route in modern Hollywood guise as Dr Heckyl and Mr Hype. He's ugly (well, uglier) as the Hulky green medico with the facial lumps and Et Cheapo wig, and his more usual, dark, satanic self as Hype ... a real ladykiller.



The switch in director Charles B. Griffith's version of the old R.L. Stevenson saga, is that Olly Reed is pug-ugly — amateurish lumpy make-up with a Woolworths' wig — as Dr Heckyl, and his own smooth lined, satanic and burly self as his alter-ego, Mr Hype. "The good-looking guys get away with murder," says Heckyl; and indeed, Hype kills anyone who does not fall instantly in love with him. As a comedy, it's a flop. Heckyl works in a medical

firm called Heckyl, Hinkle and Hoo ... ho-ho! Heckyl is a podiatrist (oh, look it up yourself); Hinkle a dietician; Hoo an acuticklist: ie, a shrink who tickles people straight with two peacock feathers.

Oh me, oh my ... Still Olly Reed was also available in the Cannes marketplace in something even more dire. *A Touch of the Sun*, which even had poor Peter Cushing aboard. What some people do for rent money ...

... Except, I remember meeting Floyd again in London when he was casting the film, and hearing from him later when he'd begun shooting in Ireland.

And now suddenly, here it was a couple of years late. Why the delay? Money — what else? "Financial difficulties have delayed completion for two years," says Floyd, "and I've had to do almost all of the post-production myself. Nonetheless, the picture has become better as a result of having more time to think about its weaknesses. Finishing it became a professional challenge and tested my own abilities and taught me a lot. Producing and directing can mean a great deal of work and conflict ... but it's the only sure way open to independent filmmakers to do what they want."

The finished film is now called *The Sleep of Death* and I must say it almost produced *The Sleep of Boredom* in me. It is a most laboured effort, indeed. Scripted by Floyd and his wife, Yvonne, it is as close to the original work as was Victor Frankenstein — too much so, in both cases. It seems wrong to complain of this (it's rare enough in Gothic cinema), but it happens to be true. It means that it takes hours for any of the central characters to comprehend the mysteries around them, while the fantasy-genre audiences watching are way ahead because they've seen it all before. The genre has moved from the original books, and films of the classics have to do likewise — otherwise the cast appear to be complete fools.

Mixed performances (and accents) from a wildly assorted international cast: Sweden's Per Oscarson (Floyd's excellent monster in Victor F), Ireland's Patrick Magee and Niall Toibin (best actor in the piece), Italy's Merilu Tolo (dubbed), and Brenda Price from *The Over-Amorous Milkmen* and similarly lame British exploitation, as the far too mod — looking hero. Curt Jurgens was also involved, hardly — if ever — saying a word. His role as Tolo's husband consisted of meaningful Tonic glances, and in such short clips, they could have been shot in the VIP Lounge et Dublin Airport between flights ...

Three years ago, Calvin Floyd, a great fen of Gothic literature and the director of tv's *In Search of Dracula*, admitted to me, "I'm tiring of the genre." *Sleep of Death*, alas, proves it.

SF—TOKYO STYLE

As always, you can at least depend on the great Toei Company of Tokyo for some kind of science fantasy at Cannes. Animation, in the main. This year they excelled themselves, with both animation and live-action ... thinly-disguised versions of American tv shows, such as *Fantasy Island* meets *Love Boat* on the *Time Express*, and their own (and indeed *superior*) rip-off of Kirk Douglas' *The Final Countdown* movie with modern day tanks and

THINGS TO COME

heavy armaments being time-warped back 400 years to the days of the samurai and the spear...

Galaxy Express 999, from animator Kazuo Komotsubara, put a modern railway train into "boundless space". The passengers were out to "pursue the naked eye (which makes things easier on the animators), the Galaxy Express takes its assorted passengers and their stories from Titen, a satellite of Saturn, to the ice planet of Pluto (where an ice cemetery is full of frozen bodies hoping to be brought alive again in a thousand years), on to the Trader Junction, the Skeleton Planet, the Castle of Time and various adventures *en route* with such folk as women pirate Queen Emeraldus and the menhunting robots led by one Mechanical Duke...

Kosei Saito directed **Time Slip** from Ryo Hanamura's book. Sonny Chiba, the now legendary star of the Far Eastern street-fighter karate-movies, headlines the cast, and orchestrated the amazing fight sequences as a 1980 Japanese Army Platoon of tanks, armoured cars and jeeps headed for manoeuvres on the coast are transported in time — as time itself stops — to 400 years ago when rival warlords are trying to take over the entire country. Tanks vs spears is a sight to be seen, and soon enough Chiba, as the Army lieutenant, and Isao Natsuki as the old warlord are taking over the land together, in unison. Ironically, Sonny Chiba was the original star of Japan's entry in the Cannes festival competition, Kurosawa's **Kagemusha**. He apparently did not get on with the grand old samurai of a director, and left the project... which went on to win the Golden Palm award, trying with Bob Fosse's **All That Jazz**. Still, Chiba has a fine old time in **Time Slip**, too long like all Japanese movies, but eminently better time-warping stuff than **The Final Countdown**... though when it comes to feudal battles, with or without tanks, no one can beat Kurosawa.

KUROSAWA &...

The international release version of Kurosawa's film, by the way is being edited now by Francis Coppola and George Lucas (and, so it's rumoured, Steven Spielberg, too), who assisted, or in fact insisted, on it being made at all. They exercised their considerable muscle on 20th Century-Fox to put up the breed... Kurosawa, at 70, advertised his availability for work in Europe during the fortnight here. I hope that doesn't mean what it sounds — that Coppola and Lucas have dropped him as swiftly as they picked him up.

TON-UP

By the way, I think I've discovered why Klaus Kinski walked out of **Condomen**... That would, by my reckoning, have been his 100th

SUPERKLAUS

The star Billy Reed replaced as the baddy in **Condomen**, Klaus Kinski, had three (or more) films on view in the market. He does work up a storm, this fellow... Ironically, one of the trio was for the same Cannon Group which seemed so determined to ruin Reed's career. Kinski got off more lightly. Besides, he's made more rotten movies than anyone else alive in movies today — and has survived them all.

In David Paulsen's **Murder By Mail** — opposite the ever-luscious Murielle Hill as a Dear Abby columnist — Klaus is a psychiatrist whose patients are being murdered, one by one.



The suspects are many, including Kinski's own (screen) daughter, Donna Wilkes... A mite heavy-handed from writer-director Paulsen, but more acceptable within its genre than much of the Cannoned of films they unleashed on us this year.

Kinski, though was far better treated by both his new French films: **Haine** (Hate) with Marie Schneider (yes, she's actually completed the odd film lately) and **Le Fomme-Enfant** (or Child Woman) co-starring the remarkable young American, Penelope Palmer, in a superlative debut from director Raphaële Billetdoux.

99 Not Out! Klaus Kinski, minus his *Nostradamus* fangs, is a psychiatrist with more problems than his patients in his 99th movie, **Murder by Mail**.

American shocker, **Murder by Mail**. Donna Wilkes, who survived a short role in *Jaws*, is his disturbed daughter, highly jealous of dad's female conquests and high among the suspects during a killing spree with his patients as the only victims.



film. And for a character like Klaus Kinski to celebrate his ton by working for Disney of all companies... well, it just wouldn't gel would it?

SANDY SLOWS

Producer Sandy Howard (**Death Ship**, **Metaor**, **City on Fire**, etc) has always been a big wheel at Cannes. Not any more. His films, as we all know, have been slipping... But he's still alive and well and searching for a winner. He's tied up now with the Howard Goldfarb's new ICA combine, and among his projects is John Lind's **Invisible Empire**, with (yet again) tv newpersons as the heroes uncovering something rotten in the state of armaments sales. In order to make a faster buck, he's also planning a third movie about **A Man Called Horse**. So the writing's on the wall for Howard. Perhaps. His ICA partner has a livelier production forth-

coming with a re-make of Todd Browning's **Freaks**. "You won't be able to turn your head away," says Howard Goldfarb. Perhaps he's forgetting John Hurt's **Elephant Man** will be ready first...

**NEXT MONTH:
MORE NEWS
FROM THE
CANNES
FILM FESTIVAL**

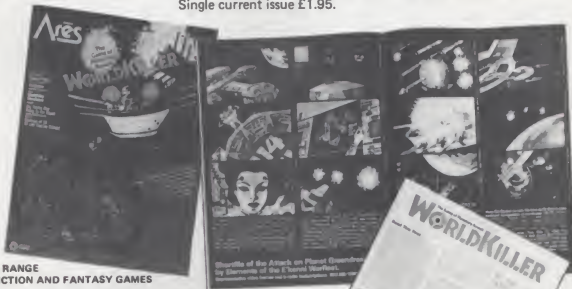
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A STARBUST FILM REVIEW

THE FINAL



REVIEW BY
JOHN BROSNAN

This is one of those films that must have seemed a great idea at the time. "Hey, how about a movie about what happens when a modern aircraft carrier gets sent back in time to the day the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour?" "Wow, man! That's wild! Here's 15 million dollars. Go and make it!"

And away they went. The first and major problem came when they started to write the script. Now the obvious appeal of the idea is in being able to show how modern military technology would completely overwhelm the technology of 1941. In other words, we want to see the aircraft carrier and its modern aircraft blow those sneaky Japs and their old-fashioned Zeros out of the sky before they can

get to Pearl Harbour. But, of course, if the aircraft carrier *does* do this and everts the attack, then history will be drastically altered and an infinite number of paradoxes created.

So the script writers soon realized that though they'd managed to put their aircraft carrier back in 1941, via a time warp that resembles an ocean-going black hole, there wasn't much they could actually have it *do*. As a result not much of importance happens until the time warp makes an inevitable reappearance at a crucial moment and conveniently scoops up the carrier again. It also scoops up squadrons of fighters which happen to be in the air a considerable distance away at the time (I couldn't figure this out), and plunks the lot back in 1979.

There is one minor clash between modern forces and the 1941 Japanese — this involves a dogfight between two Zeros and two jet

fighters and is the most impressive sequence in the film — and also an encounter with two 1941 Americans, which provides the means of getting Katherine Ross on board the carrier, but basically all the possibilities the situation contains are left unexploited by the writers. Instead they play it safe and succeed in turning what was originally an audacious idea into a movie that is a total non-event.

On a purely technical level, however, the film is well made and looks very good, with the exception of Maurice Binder's lurid and unsuitable optical effects. The real star is the aircraft carrier itself, the USS Nimitz, and all its glittering machines and armaments. Considered as a very lavish and expensive recruitment film for the American Navy then *The Final Countdown* is an undoubted success but it bears as little resemblance to a good science fiction movie as 1941 does to a good comedy.

COUNTDOWN

REVIEW BY
PHIL EDWARDS

It's a great pity that the new time travel feature, *The Final Countdown*, is such a disaster. Hidden at the core of the film is basically a very interesting idea. That is, that a super-atomic aircraft carrier, USS *Nimitz*, is transported, via a time warp, to the day before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour and finds itself within striking distance of the Japanese fleet. The fire power of the *Nimitz* could easily destroy the Japanese and thereby alter the course of history.

The film boasts a fine cast of usually worthy players who are sadly given little to do. That the film is directed by Don Taylor, who in the past helmed *Escape from the Planet of the Apes* and the superior but generally under-rated *Damien-Omen Two*, further adds to the mystery of what can only be described as a basic wrong-headedness in every aspect of the film.

It's painfully obvious that the US Navy gave every co-operation in the making of the big budget film, by handing over the *Nimitz* to producer, Peter Vincent Douglas, (yet another of the Douglas progeny), giving the film-makers a multi-million dollar set which would have been impossible to duplicate on any soundstage. However, the price seems to have been high. Never in a film has so much footage been given over to endless scenes of life in the navy.

The sequences of the "time-storm" overtaking the ship and the planes are interestingly



Above: Warren Lasky (Martin Sheen), Commander Richard Owens (James Farentino) and Captain Matt Yelland (Kirk Douglas) try to make some sense out of the strange radio signals and reconnaissance information after their ship passes through a time storm. Below right: Two Japanese Zeros bomb a civilian motor yacht a few miles from Hawaii. Below left: A captured Japanese pilot threatens the life of Laurei Scott (Katherine Ross) aboard the USS *Nimitz*.



done but the effects end up looking like out takes from *The Black Hole* and there are a couple of shots of what is obviously a far from detailed model of the ship which can only bring derision when one considers the advances made in miniature special effects in the last few years.

There is a sub-plot which concerns Charles Durning and Katherine Ross as a couple from 1941 who are brought aboard the super-carrier after their pleasure craft is sunk by a couple of scouting Japanese Zeros. This entire sequence is reminiscent of the worst American features of the wartime Forties and would do nothing to further American-Japanese relations.

There is a lot to be said for the crew of the *Nimitz* however, most of whom play them-

selves. When told that they have been transported back in time forty years, they hardly even blink and carry on their duties as though it were an everyday occurrence. Of course, I could be missing some comment on navy training there.

The film ends with a twist, which for a split-second actually works, although it doesn't take too much thinking before one realises that it too is ludicrous.

To be fair however, *The Final Countdown* is well photographed by Victor Kemper and a couple of action scenes are well handled by Taylor, particularly a shoot out with a captured Japanese pilot and the film carefully avoids the traps into which time travel films usually fall.



A TRIBUTE TO ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Tony Crawley looks back at the career of the master of cinema suspense.



Pay tribute to Hitchcock... Easier said than done. Difficult to cover the cherubic Master's glory without compiling a book; and there's enough of those around (Truffaut's and John Russell Taylor's for tops). Since the sadly inevitable news of April 29 — far too soon, we hadn't got used to calling him Sir Alfred yet — there's been tribute aplenty; Clive James' for example, only he managed to honour the man and his work with respect and humour, eschewing the usual critical cant.

Whether Alfred Hitchcock is part of our chosen Starbustian genre(s) or not, we owe him. Anyone still turned on by film, that is. Directors the world over from Kurosawa to Bergman, Minelli, Clouzot, Wise, Resnais and Wyler to Preminger, Polanski, Truffaut, Mel Brooks and obviously De Palma, have all made their "Hitchcock film". At least one. His influence will remain as immense as his fame. He's the very first star director.

Spielberg is another who owns up to being a major fan. For Roy Scheider's shark-spotting beach scene in *Jaws*, Spiel-

berg adapted Hitchcock's famous triple-zoom reverse shot — track in, zoom out — from *Vertigo* (1958), when Jimmy Stewart looked down the tower stairs... when Steven Spielberg was ten years old and hadn't yet taken over his father's cine-camera. "I've been waiting all my life to put that shot in a movie," says the *wunderkind*.

Hitch, himself, had waited 15 years to work it out, since experiencing a similar vision when drunk one London night after the Chelsea Arts Ball. They told him at Paramount the shot would cost 50,000 dollars with sets, pulleys and counterweights for the camera. Hitch did it, with miniatures, for less than half (19,000 dollars). I hate to think what it cost Spielberg to shoot it, and shoot it and shoot it...

Hitchcock didn't need many re-takes. He was a meticulous planner, never allowing his techniques to impede his

story-telling but to enhance it — visually, always visually. Some of his finest sequences were silent, or at least free of dialogue — ten minutes in the Albert Hall concert in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1955) and the seven minutes of Cary Grant vs the crop duster in *North by Northwest* (1959).

But he was an innovator from the outset. In 1926, he had *The Lodger* pacing the floor of his room, shot from beneath a glass floor, complete with swinging chandelier (and that in his real directing debut). In his first, and last-minute, talkie *Blackmail* (1926), he fudged the sound of a chattering harpy's dialogue to allow her constant repetition of "knife" to come through and jangle

In the poster below, Alfred Hitchcock's name is printed larger than those of the stars, showing just how much of a box office draw the Hitchcock name was.

* NO ONE ... BUT NO ONE ... WILL BE
ADMITTED TO THE THEATRE AFTER THE
START OF EACH PERFORMANCE OF

ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S PSYCHO

STARRING

ANTHONY PERKINS · VERA MILES · JOHN GAVIN

* *by Alfred Hitchcock* and JANET LEIGH as MARION CRANE



Above left: Alfred Hitchcock, at home in the director's chair. Above right: Despite Hitchcock's having been quoted as saying "Actors are cattle" — ("Actually, what I said was Actors should be treated like cattle") he still seemed to find time to share a joke with Janet Leigh on the set of *Psycho*.

images jumped around on the screen and it was understandable to all nationalities.

"Even today, if a film goes up country in Thailand, they take the sound-track off and a man stands beside the screen and tells the story. The films are shown silent and he's a very important figure. In fact, they told me in Thailand once that sometimes the exhibitors pay him more money than they do for the picture! He does bits of dialogue as well, but fundamentally, it's the visual image which is telling all.

"Unfortunately, this is lost to a great extent today. There is a tendency to rely entirely on dialogue. Your characters today are more complex, and the only way the characterisation can be developed is through dialogue. In the old days, characters were more simple. The villain could be discerned immediately because he hit the dog. The heroine was flaxen-haired . . . that goes back to Mary Pickford. The hero was always dark and the heroine always blonde. I think that came about so that you could tell one from the other! They were almost like symbols. The images were very simple and straightforward. Then, talk came they took it too far, told the story with talk, which is an extension of theatre.

"I think in the conception of a film's story, one should instinctively direct the writing towards the visual. You can't avoid the expository nature of certain scenes. The MacGuffin . . . what it is about -- and get that out of the way. It's not important. You have all that in the spy films . . . All where Robert Donat picks up a woman in a music-hall, takes her back to his apartment and she says, 'I'm a spy and I'm after a man whose

finger is missing from his left hand' . . . She sets up the whole thing in that dialogue scene. It has been done without dialogue, but it's not too easy.

"I've never taken any writing credits on my films. But I work on the script from the beginning with the writer — usually a novelist; he's the best casting-man because he writes out descriptions of the characters, with fine detail. Certain directors like to improvise on the set. I don't care to — because I can improvise when we're writing. I'm making the picture on paper. That needs, of course, a very visual mind and a complete knowledge of cutting — so the thing is orchestrated at the same time, by deciding what the cuts are going to be.

That's when it clicked. He sounded bored with making films. I suggested, because he'd already shot them in his head. "You're dead right," he replied. "I'll go so far to say that I wish I did not have to go on the set and shoot it." And spoil it? "Yes, because from that point on, you start the compromises. The first is casting . . ."

Apart from all his magic with movies and mayhem, I remember Hitch best for his stories about his wicked line in practical jokes. "They weren't punitive in any way, they created bewilderment." I'll say. One created havoc in the overly lovey-dovey lives of an unctuous married couple running a radio request show that he and Alma listened to over their 7 am breakfast in L.A. Another, for a star-packed party in a swish London restaurant, was a Hitch-designed dinner. All the food — soup, trout, chicken, ice-cream — was blue. "The rolls on your side plate were brown — but blue inside." Cigarettes

"blue" up in guests' faces, Gertrude Lawrence sat on "one of those awfully rude cushions", and when the blue ice-cream arrived he had it served by every waiter in the joint, — "about a hundred of them; we were absolutely crushed to the table in that little room!"

That was, perhaps, the best side of Sir Alfred Hitchcock, film-maker supreme. He loved movies; he loved life even more. We'll miss the old man more than we might realise just now. (De Palma is no substitute). Fortunately, Hitch left us with a wondrous inheritance. Some of the most expertly made movies ever seen. Long may they run.

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REG HILL

THOUGH HE BEGAN AS A DESIGNER, WORKING ON SUCH EARLY GERRY ANDERSON SHOWS AS *SUPERCAR*, *FIREBALL XL5* AND *STINGRAY*, REG HILL LATER BECAME MORE INVOLVED ON THE PRODUCTION SIDE OF THE CENTURY 21 COMPANY, EVENTUALLY BECOMING EXECUTIVE PRODUCER FOR THE WHOLE ANDERSON LINE OF TV SHOWS. JOHN FLEMING INTERVIEWED REG HILL EARLIER THIS YEAR.

Reg Hill was executive producer on most of the best-remembered Gerry Anderson television series. But, back before the Second World War, he was working in the display advertising department of a wholesale grocers in the City of London. From there, he moved on to Odhams Press, designing ads for people who bought space in publications: "I had no intention of going into film at all," he told me. "I'd always had an interest in photography: maybe there's a connection there, I don't know."

After the war, which he spent in the RAF like many future Anderson personnel, a friend from his Odhams days persuaded him to enter the film industry and, for about twelve years, he worked for National Interest Picture Productions, turning out films for the Army, Air Force etc. He says they were "basically instructional films which included a helluva lot of models and animation."

A cameraman at N.I.P. was loaned out to another company, Polytechnic Films, where he met Gerry Anderson. Polytechnic Films collapsed and several staff members started their own company making commercials — Pentagon Films. Reg Hill joined them "because, to put it mildly, they were short of a good artist. I was with this little outfit for probably about a year. They were struggling and we just about lived from one commercial to another." Then producer Roberta Lee contacted two of the Pentagon staff (Gerry Anderson and Arthur Provis) with an idea for a puppet series to be called *The Adventures of Twizzle*.

So AP Films was formed, taking its name from the initial letters of Anderson and Provis. They were joined by Reg Hill, John Read and Gerry's future wife Sylvia.



Along the way, Arthur Provis left. A little later, with the company now called Century 21, John Read left. The company became Group 3 — Reg Hill, Gerry Anderson and Sylvia. Today, it is just Gerry Anderson Productions, with neither Reg Hill or Sylvia Anderson involved.

When I met Reg Hill, I asked him about the early days and Supercar, the first series in which Lew Grade of ATV/ITC was involved: "I did the designing of the craft and the initial brochure that we used to present to dear

"When Lew saw the idea and the illustration of Supercar he just said Go ahead and do it."

old Lew," he told me. "When Lew saw the idea and the illustration of Supercar he just said *Go ahead and do it*. There was only ourselves and maybe a dozen or so people working with us. So I did all the designing and helped to build the models and so on. Not the puppets, though — They were all done by puppeteers. I'm just not interested in little wooden dolls. I'd help them get characters and I've designed faces, but the actual modelling and making the little heads out of fibreglass and putting mouth mechanisms in — that's not my cup of tea."

For the next series *Fireball XL5*, Derek Meddings (see interview in *Starburst* 11 & 12) helped on the design side and gradually, over subsequent series, Reg Hill moved onto the executive side: "I went," he says, "from designing and art directing through to administration and planning. So I planned the whole of the studio at Stirling Road (in Slough), where everything would go, the general running and administration, the whole lot. And then, as it got a bit bigger still, I went on to actual producing — looking after the entire production and then bringing in someone who'd act as studio manager. You've got to remember we were not only a production company making films, but we were also a 'studio' company with our own studios, our own equipment and carpenters and paint shop and so on."

So did he miss the practical creativity of production? "Well," he told me,

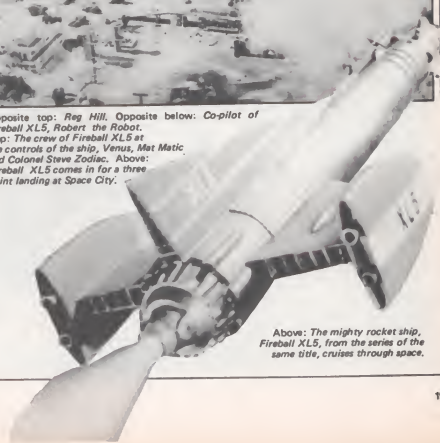
"There weren't any outside experts to bring in (in those early days). We were the experts."

"When it comes to the creative part of the film, if you have an overall view rather than being stuck down designing this or that, I think you can very often be more useful. When you've got to get a lot of other people working for you, you've literally got to teach them the process. Our filming in those days was unique. There weren't any outside experts to bring in. We were the experts."



Opposite top: Reg Hill. Opposite below: Co-pilot of *Fireball XL5*, Robert the Robot.

Top: The crew of *Fireball XL5* at the controls of the ship, Venus, Mat Matic and Colonel Steve Zodiac. Above: *Fireball XL5* comes in for a three point landing at Space City.



Above: The mighty rocket ship, *Fireball XL5*, from the series of the same title, cruises through space.

"No-one else was doing puppet shows that way — not knocking out a picture every fortnight. There was a time when we used to roll on. If we weren't actually shooting, we were either running down or running up for the next series and, when we became Century 21 Productions, I don't think we ever stopped. We just went from series to series. And you suddenly find, when you're employing somewhere in the region of 200 people, there isn't time to do all the designing and the building and everything else: you suddenly find that you are administering. And that's finally what I did."

So was he happy doing that? "Not unhappy," he told me. "No, not unhappy."

When I talked to Reg Hill, he was a

'continuity illustrator' — storyboarding major sequences — on the Superman movie. Why him? "Well, I think it comes easier to a person who has a knowledge of film and how a film is put together in its entirety. You don't have to be a good artist to be continuity sketch artist. (Laughs) That's probably why I got the

"Even if someone asked me to join them as a co-producer now, I wouldn't do it."

job. No, the important thing is that I've employed people in the past — people like Derek Meddings, Keith Wilson (see *Starburst* 13), Brian Johnson (see *Starburst* 9), art director Bob Bell — they've all gone through our company. When

you've had all this experience, assuming that some of it has sunk in, then at a later date you should be able to put it to some good advantage. Most people — if they're working on model building, special effects, editing, art directing or whatever — only look at the picture from their point of view. But, if you've had to control the whole shooting-match (as Hill did at the *Anderson studio*) you have to get a combination of *all* these things. It needs a different type of outlook and this comes in handy when you're storyboarding. You're drawing out a complete sequence. The very fact that you've got the practical knowledge means that what you have drawn can be shot.

"And it isn't particularly stressful. I could be doing this when I'm 75. I'm



happy to earn myself some money and go home and my wife and I can go out to dinner — we do what we want to do. Even if someone asked me to join them as a co-producer now, I wouldn't do it. And yet other people would be jumping at the chance. But I believe that if you have been working hard all your life as I did — especially from 40 onwards, when most people are slowing down but I was still going full tilt — I would like to have enough time to do lots of things for myself before I peg out. Unlike the soldier, I don't want to die with my boots on. I don't still want to do all the things I used to do. Some people do. I mean, dear old Lew Grade couldn't lie down if he wanted to. It's addictive. But I've found more interesting things than work."



Opposite: Colonel Steve Zodiac and his co-pilot, Robert the Robot, at the controls of Fireball XL5. Top: Reg Hill on the (miniature) set of Four Feather Falls, an early Anderson western puppet series. Above left and right: As these photos show, Fireball XL5 had the ability to separate into two sections. The idea was that the larger section would stay in orbit, while the smaller command section could land on the surface of any convenient planet, thereby conserving fuel. Left: The command centre of Fireball XL5, Space City. Below: Steve and Venus used these "hover-bikes" for short range reconnaissance.

THE STAR WARS INTERVIEWS: PART TWO

MARK HAMILL

MARK HAMILL IS PERHAPS BEST KNOWN THE WORLD OVER AS LUKE SKYWALKER, THE YOUNG FARM BOY WHO BECOMES ENMESHED IN A GALACTIC STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE MIGHTY EMPIRE AND THE HOPELESSLY OUTCLASSED REBEL ALLIANCE. BEFORE BEGINNING WORK ON THE THIRD FILM (ACTUALLY STAR WARS: PART SIX, THE REVENGE OF THE JEDI) MARK HAMILL FOUND TIME FOR A SERIES OF INTERVIEWS IN LONDON EARLIER THIS YEAR. STARBURST'S JOHN BROSNAN SPOKE TO THE YOUNG STAR WARS STAR AT HIS HOTEL IN LONDON EARLIER THIS YEAR.

was caught by surprise when Mark Hamill, star of *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*, announced that not only was he familiar with *Starburst* but actually had every issue of the magazine. "I buy them regularly in Hollywood," he told me as he eagerly examined the latest issue. The interview was taking place in his London hotel suite shortly after the opening of *The Empire Strikes Back* and the whole publicity machine was in top gear. But though this must have been Hamill's hundredth interview within the last few days his energy and enthusiasm seemed undiminished. In this respect he does have something in common with the character of the young Luke Skywalker but in reality he is a 27 year-old actor with 10 years professional experience behind him.

I shouldn't have been too surprised to learn that he collected *Starburst* as I had heard he was a genuine fan of sf and fantasy movies and in fact I'd once read a piece by him in a special effects fanzine. When I mentioned this to him it was his turn to be surprised. "I'm amazed," he said, "I meet about one person in a thousand who knows that. It was an interview I did with Kerwin Matthews (star of *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* and other fantasy movies). I read in *FXRH* (*Film Effects by Ray Harryhausen*) that they wanted to know if anyone knew the location of Kerwin Matthews because they'd like to interview him. At the time I was on a soap opera in the States called *General Hospital*, which

isn't the same one that's on over here, and I'd met him only recently. So I wrote to *FXRH* and I said *I know where Kerwin Matthews is, I know where he lives, I know where he eats, I know where he does his laundry but I won't tell you unless you let me do the interview.*

"So they said okay. I didn't get a fee for it, I just got a free trip to San Francisco to cover the science fiction convention they were having up there to interview Kerwin and talk to him about his work in Harryhausen's movies. When people see that issue now they think, *That's weird, I wonder if it's the same*



guy from Star Wars... no, it can't be. But it is."

I asked him if being a fan of the genre meant that working on the Star Wars films was a real pleasure for him. "Yeah, it really is. I've done a lot of work on different television shows that I wouldn't allow to be beamed into my house but they were just jobs I did as an actor. But luckily for me I love to work in this — I hate the word *genre* — but *genre*."

But wasn't he getting tired of devoting so much of his career to the Star Wars movies. After all, it had started for him

"First of all, I think in *Empire* the story is just beginning to emerge."

back in 1976. Wasn't he just a little weary of the whole thing now?

"No, not at all! Really! First of all I think in *Empire* the story is just beginning to emerge. They laid the groundwork in the first one but now we can develop the story and the characters. Star Wars was very emotional but it was a much more visually orientated experience. I mean, for instance, the exalted feeling you get when we blow up the Death Star is a very mechanical manipulation of the emotions but in *Empire* we have to rely on the character revelations as the emotional climax. There was a kid at the media screening here of *Empire* who was just in tears at the end of it and he was saying to me, *It's not true, it's not true... you lost!* And I was saying to him that I didn't lose. It was a moral victory! It was a moral victory that Luke didn't join with Darth Vader."

What about other sf and fantasy films? Was he still able to maintain his fanish enthusiasm for the genre after all the years of working on the Star Wars series? "Oh sure! I see them all. I haven't seen *Saturn 3* yet but that's the only one. My favourites, since Star Wars, are *Close Encounters* and *Alien*. Oh boy, I loved *Alien*! I wish I could have been in *Alien*. It could have been like Janet Leigh in *Psycho*. If they'd billed me in a starring role in *Alien* and then have me get killed first it would have really surprised audiences. That would have been great! I would love to do something like that. In fact now I would love to be in the remake of *The Thing* and get killed right away..."

"But, I never thought of Star Wars as science fiction. I thought of it as a fairy tale. One of my favourite earlier versions of the Star Wars screenplay had a clever device to off-set the technology of the whole thing so that audiences wouldn't think that it was going to be another 2001 when they see the cruiser going overhead. It started with a helicopter shot of an enchanted forest and they push the camera through the window of a tree and



Opposite above: Mark Hamill peruses the latest issue of *Starburst* during the interview in London earlier this year. Opposite below: Mark Hamill as Luke Skywalker from the opening scenes of *The Empire Strikes Back*. Above: Between Star Wars and *The Empire Strikes Back*, Hamill made a movie, in which he played an altogether different character to the familiar Skywalker, *Corvette Summer*. Below: In the thrilling climax of *The Empire Strikes Back*, Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill) faces the foe he's clearly no match for... Darth Vader (Dave Prowse).



you see a mother Wookiee trying to breast feed this squealing baby Wookiee. He keeps gesturing towards the bookshelf and there's all this Wookiee dialogue going on. She goes and points to one particular book and the baby gets all excited [Mark did a creditable imitation of what an excited baby Wookiee might sound like at this point]. She takes the book off the shelf and we see it's titled *Star Wars*. She opens the book and that's when the ship comes overhead and the film we know starts... Then, at the end, after we get our medals, we bow and it cuts back to the baby Wookiee asleep — hopefully not like the audience. And the mother

closes the book and puts the baby to bed. And that would have got across that it was intended to be a fairy story."

Tactfully not admitting that I thought it sounded rather appalling I asked why the idea had been abandoned.

"Well you have to go back to 1976 when we were going into production and the Fox executives were sending us memos like, *Why doesn't the Wookiee have any pants on?*

"It's true" he continued after the *Starburst* laughter had subsided, "and we were saying, *Hey, come on guys, if you're going to ask that sort of question why are you making the movie?* What's another of

my favourites? Oh yes, the scene in the movie where a Jawa comes up to me outside the Cantina and starts mucking around with my land-speeder and I sort of brush him away in disgust. And that should telegraph to everyone the humans' relationship with Jawas. The audience has already seen them scavenging for metal and selling robots so everyone knows what they are, but the executives wanted me to add a line like, *Oh, look, it's a Jawa, a member of a small band of scavenging desert rodents who search the land for metal... I They wanted everything explained.*

"But there was so much in the screenplay that didn't make it into the movie. Like the monster that pulls me under the water in the garbage tank, that was a Dianoga. And I said to George, *This is weird. If the walls go in and crush us how come the monster doesn't get squashed too?* And he had it all worked out, it wasn't as if he was making it up on the spot. He told me that in man-made battle stations they import these creatures that will eat all the organic material in the garbage and leave the metal, and when the button is pushed and the walls start moving in to compress the metal, they recognise the sound and swim down into

"George (Lucas) gets very depressed when he makes movies. He's always convinced he'll be exposed as having no talent."

their little cubby holes. He had it all so planned out, not that the audience will ever know...

"George gets very depressed when he makes movies. He's always convinced that once and for all he'll be exposed as having no talent. And he gets so disappointed with the finished product. Because when you make a movie in your mind everything is perfect but when you finally have to realize it on film it's never the same. So he gets bugged out when he's making a film.

"I remember when we were shooting that scene in the trash compactor. I was standing in my storm trooper costume next to the big drop in the water and there was a scuba diver under the surface with his hands around my legs ready to pull me under. When it came to the point for me to go under I'd just tap him with my foot and he'd pull me down while I held my breath. So I was standing there waiting and waiting for everything to be right and I noticed George standing nearby looking really depressed and shaking his head. So I just happened to catch his eye, I hadn't planned this — it was just out of desperation that this idea came into my head what with the monster being called a Dianoga and everything. I picked up one of the little bits of fluff, green pieces of styrofoam floating on the water, and to the tune of



Above: Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill), trapped with Han Solo (Harrison Ford) in the Death Star garbage compactor, is attacked by the dreaded Dianoga. Opposite left: Two portraits of Skywalker from *The Empire Strikes Back*. Opposite right: During the interview, Mark Hamill answered questions with undiminished energy and enthusiasm.

Chatanooqa Choo-choo I started to sing, *Pardon me George, could this be Dianoga poo-poo?*

And to show you how depressed he was he didn't even smile. I got a smile out of you — I didn't get a laugh but I got a smile — but George just sighed, put his foot up on my stormtrooper chest and suddenly I was under the water."

With jokes like that it's not surprising that Lucas walks around the set looking depressed, but is it true he doesn't like making movies? "He just feels disappointed with the results. He told me he was 40 to 50 percent satisfied with *American Graffiti* and only 20% satisfied with *Star Wars*. That's why he wants to make it a series because he thinks eventually he may get it right. He liked *Empire* better. I don't know if the audience will because after a successful film the tendency is to deliver a sequel —

that's a tricky word, sequel — but *Empire* is not really a sequel. I did sign originally for three films and George had even then written the entire storyline. Some of it has been dressed up in *Empire* to satisfy audience expectations but for the most part *Empire* is the same story he wrote all those years ago."

Was he, I wondered, looking forward to working on the next one? "Absolutely. First of all I want to know what happens next, and secondly I think it's all getting more interesting. Now the story is emerging and people's perceptions about the characters will have to change. Like Ben Kenobi being the symbol of purity and righteousness. Well, in *Empire* if he wasn't lying to Luke he at least wasn't being 100% truthful, and I think all that is interesting. Whether audiences will agree I don't know yet. I think it's a gamble because people may be expecting



the same kind of phenomenon that he had with the first one. The kids went back to *Star Wars* again and again because it always delivered that same feeling of exultation — it was very triumphant and very optimistic — but *Empire* is real downbeat and it raises so many questions and worries. But I think it's great we're taking this gamble . . ."

I suggested that *Star Wars* fans would be certain to find *Empire* much more satisfying than the *Star Trek* fans did with their movie. "I have to be very careful about that," he said, "because I missed *Star Trek* when it was first shown on American tv. We were living in Japan then because my father, a Naval officer, had been transferred there. But I later saw the reruns, of course. When I went to see the movie I thought, well, gee, if that had been done in an hour on tv it would have been great but not for a 45 million

dollar movie."

Knowing that he was an old special effects enthusiast I asked him how he rated the effects in *Empire*. "As far as I'm concerned you see a lot of movies where you look at the special effects and say, gee, isn't that nice, but you're saying that removed from the experience and it doesn't really mean anything. But when I

"Watching *The Empire Strikes Back* I got a great surge of enthusiasm and that's the key."

first saw the snow walker sequence in *Empire* put together I was just thrilled with the emotional connection — the way it's set up to create a David and Goliath kind of feeling with those little mosquito-like snow speeders versus the giant walkers.

"I was worried about the effects

because now the effects you see in tv commercials now seem like those in *Star Wars* — come to carpet *Nirvana* where a galaxy of bargains await you! And then they cut to the big spaceships going overhead . . . and you just wonder if people are going to get fed up with this kind of stuff. But watching *Empire* I got a great surge of enthusiasm and that's the key — you care enough about the situation and so the effects are complementing the action rather than dominating it. The best effects are the ones you don't notice anyway. People see the Tauntauns and they know they can't be real so they look closely at them but the effects you just accept matter-of-factly, those are the really exciting ones."

As the whole *Star Wars* saga is the brain-child of George Lucas alone I wondered if it was easy for him to relinquish control on the making of *Empire*.

Was he, I asked, a constant presence on the set?

"No. He would come and watch but he wouldn't stand next to the camera. Kersh would say, *You want to come over here...?* and George would say, *no, no, it's your movie*. And then you might see him way in the background peering around a set sort of watching. But he only came over to England about three times during the making of *Empire*, and only for a week each time. It really is Kershner's movie.

"But actually George did direct one scene in *Empire*. Here's an exclusive for *Starburst*. No one else knows this and in fact it's not very important, but he did. It came about this way — first John Barry died and that was a horrible experience for all of us because he was such a nice guy. He'd had such an awful experience on *Saturn 3* — he'd started working on *Empire* on the proviso that if he got the chance to direct *Saturn 3* he would leave and do it. And he did get the chance so he left *Empire* but then all that junk happened to him and he came back to us. He was all excited at getting into directing the 2nd Unit of *Empire* and then suddenly we lost him. So then Gary Kurtz did some of the 2nd Unit; Robert

Watts, who was originally our Location Manager but this time was Production Manager and Associate Producer, shot some and so did Harley Cokliss. And one day they needed someone to shoot a connecting scene between the one where I'm recovering from my snow creature experience — he was a Wampa, by the way — and the scene where I go out in the snow speeder. And there was no one else available so George did it himself.

"I would like to produce a script, written by a friend of mine. We'd do it on a low budget and everyone would be on percentage points of the profits."

"It's the scene where I'm putting on the orange suit over the khaki one, and there's a guy saying something like, *Oh, there's plenty of time to get the smaller modules on the transport*. Those lines are so much nonsense. Anyway it was just like old home week because George was there and he's fun to tease. He was doing the off-camera lines for the robot that was helping me — *I don't think we'll have time to do this, sir*, and all that sort of thing. And he said to me, *When you walk*

out just acknowledge the robot. So every time I did it I would say something different to the robot. Like, *I appreciate it*, or, *That's very kind of you*, or *How very compassionate of you*, and leave. We did it sixteen times and I said sixteen different things. And it was mostly just to get George's goat because he never knew what would be coming next. You know what, he ended up using the take where I just said, *Thanks*."

My final question was whether he was planning to get into the writing and directing side of the industry himself. "I wouldn't rule it out. I've written stuff before. It's one of those situations where if you're not going to get good offers from other people then you're going to have to do it yourself. I would like to produce a script written by a friend of mine from college. We'd do it on a low budget and everyone would be on a low salary with percentage points of the profits the way that George did it. And it would have to be a labour of love. It's an ensemble thing — there's not just one lead character, there's about twenty of them."

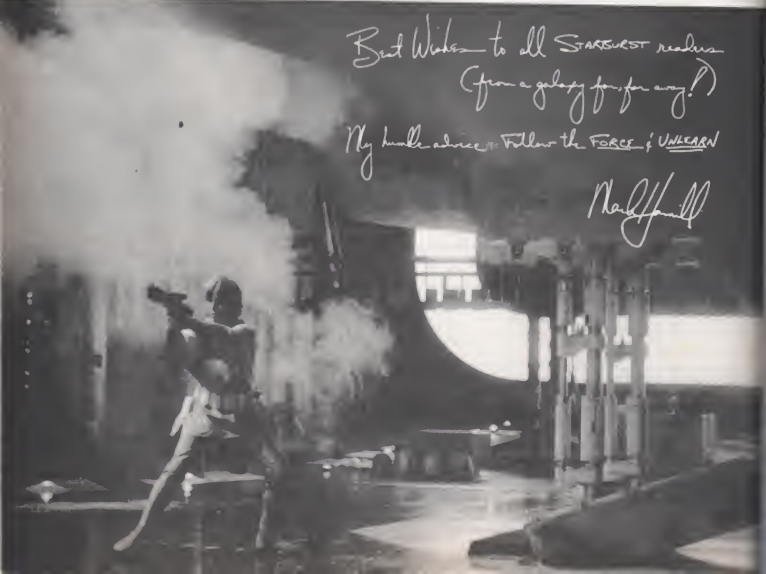
And is it science fiction? "No, as a matter of fact, it's not."

And finally, a message from Mark Hamill...

Best Wishes to all *STARBURST* readers
(from a galaxy far, far away!)

My humble advice: Follow the *FORCE* & *UNLEARN*

Mark Hamill





Mark H. Smith



ALIEN

**STAR
STAR
ANNIVERSARY**



STAR WARS



**CLOSE ENCOUNTERS
OF THE THIRD KIND**

BURST

RY POSTER



SUPERMAN

**THE EMPIRE
STRIKES BACK**



**STAR TREK
THE MOTION PICTURE**

To all the readers
of 'Stardust'
with love
Caroline Munro
X



THE STARBURST INTERVIEW

CAROLINE MUNRO

For most Starburst readers Caroline Munro needs no introduction. Her graceful feline form and dark good looks have improved a string of fantasy movies and so strong is her cult following on both sides of the Atlantic that she is, to many, the First Lady of Fantasy. Miss Munro was interviewed in London at the beginning of this year by Nicholas Leahy.

Caroline Munro, the British actress, is one of the most popular ladies of fantasy films. Her sultry beauty adorned various vehicles such as *Dracula: AD 1972*, *Captain Kronos: Vampire Hunter*, *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad*, and *At The Earth's Core*. Originally plucked from poster stardom in England, endorsing Lamb's Navy Rum on beaches around the world, her best known role to date was as the villainess in the James Bond film *The Spy Who Loved Me*. Now a film she made in Italy called *Starcrash*, in which she plays a space pilot called Stella Star, is enjoying popularity in America. Science fiction fans are extremely enthusiastic, and from the number of films she has made in this genre — plus the amount of fan mail she receives — many of them clearly regard her as the first lady of fantasy.

The overwhelming impression her image usually creates in photographs and in films is that of a *femme fatale*. An image that is hard to live up to in person. But as she welcomed me into her London flat, with her tawny, long, dark-brown hair and her made up flashing eyes, she was no disappointment.

I was surprised at how closely she corresponded to her screen image, as actresses are frequently smaller and less groomed in private. She is a satisfying heroine's height at five feet, eight inches. By luck or design, and without the help of any exotic costume, she looked ready for a sympathetic photograph at any moment.

When told this, she seemed a little disconcerted. She did not want to be confused with her image. But this is easily avoidable, as she does not speak in a voice frayed with smoke, drink or desire, but in a slow, gentle, well-spoken English accent, full of innocence rather than vice. "I am not my image, that's my work", she says. "It's not me. I could never live up to that, anyway". Can the people who write to her, or meet her, tell the difference? "I think so. I hope so. That's



E.C.

why I feel I have to make this effort in person to get myself across, to be sincere, so that they know who I really am". If a lot of those people are writing to a *femme fatale*, does she really think they are writing to her? "I do, because a lot of them I have since met, and they've met me, and every one of them I've tried to talk to, and hopefully I get to find out about them, and they get a little bit from me, so I do feel that they are really writing to Caroline Munro, actress, and

"I had a wonderful childhood. I didn't want it to end really. I always wanted to be Peter Pan."

personally as well". Does she feel they can adjust between how they see her, and the contact by letter? "I think so, I think so. Occasionally, when I go to science fiction conventions in America, the age group is enormous, from about nine-year old little boys to quite old gentlemen. Not very many ladies, and they were very shy, but very nice. But there were one or two of the young boys, not the little ones, they were quite cheeky, but the adolescent ones, who wouldn't really say anything. I think they were frightened," she said in a concerned voice. "And I didn't really want to give, I hope I don't give — that feeling, but maybe it's from the screen, this big, tough lady on the screen. This made me feel slightly uncomfortable, so I found myself perhaps overdoing it to make them feel okay." A modest woman, she is very grateful for praise. "I really am, because of their thoughts that come through the fan letters, I want to reply to them all personally, because people have taken the bother to write and to care."

Quite apart from the reactions of fans, what is her emotional relationship to her image? "When I stop and think about it, I see that it's an exhibitionist thing, but I don't think of it when I'm doing it as that." In that case, why is she acting? "It's a form of escapism. I'm very, very shy. So it's a very strange thing to choose,

"I see that acting is an exhibitionist thing, but I don't think of it, when I'm doing it, as that."

isn't it, really?" Not really. She is a little hesitant, a little anxious, and insecure like a lot of actresses. Sensitive, she is also without the customary self-absorption and vanity that usually goes with the job. She has too low an opinion of herself to make such errors.

"It's like getting back to childhood," she says. "As a child, I had a half-brother who was a lot older than me, so I would play for hours and hours by myself. Doing the voices and the characters, just

by myself. On my own, but I seemed to have many, many about me. My teddies and my dolls and whatever. I did that for hours, I was totally absorbed in it, but I was a very shy child with other children. I would never be the one to get out on stage, and the one that could do it all. I never could, I couldn't do anything at school. I could do art a bit. Once I played Jesus, but I didn't have anything to say". Crucified with long hair at the age of ten, it's been downhill ever since. "It was a wonderful childhood. I didn't want it to end really. I always wanted to be Peter Pan, I suppose."

She was born in the small sea-side town of Rottingdean, just outside Brighton. She was educated at a Catholic convent school, and at the age of seventeen her mother entered her photograph in a "Face Of The Year" contest sponsored by a London newspaper. Caroline won, and, her parents enrolled her at the Lucie Clayton modelling school in the capital. Her first job was on location in Malta for the British edition of *Vogue* magazine. More work followed, and the family moved to London so that Caroline could appear in advertisements and television commercials. Then a successful



model, she did two negligible bit parts in the films *Casino Royale* and *Where's Jack*, before being cast as Richard Widmark's daughter in a forgotten comedy western made in Spain called *A Talent for Loving*. On it she met an American musician whom she later married, becoming a step-mother to his two children.

Her big slice of luck came in 1969 when she was signed up to become the Lamb's Navy Rum girl in nationwide posters, making her instantly recognisable. Even in a coffin when she played Vincent Price's dead wife two years later,

in the films *The Abominable Dr Phibes* and *Dr Phibes Rises Again*. Turning up for work every day to lie in her tomb, she could be rightly described as an actress who was not yet animate. But in 1972, Sir James Carreras, the head of Hammer films, which had always specialised in horror films, was walking through Victoria Station when he saw one of her Lamb's Navy Rum posters. He signed her to a one year contract and cast her in a small role as a sacrificial victim in *Dracula: AD 1972*. Today, when asked if she has ever been frightened by any of the monsters she has worked with, she

usually replies: "No, but I was frightened by Christopher Lee, (better than a monster), because he looked so awesome in his cloak, and make-up." She then played the female lead in Captain Kronos: Vampire Hunter, as a gypsy. "I enjoyed that part more than any other I've ever done," she said. "It's my favourite, because it's so romantic."

Soon after, Hammer films got into financial trouble, and her contract was dropped. However, she got the lead as a

"Peter Cushing is very quiet and unspoiled. I defy anybody who's met him to say a bad word about him."



slave girl in *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad*, involving her with the special effects monsters created by Ray Harryhausen. But she hardly ever met those mythological beasts consumed with a desire to eat her. "I worked opposite a black curtain, in front of which somebody would wave a stick around to represent the monster moving, and I had to look at the stick and react to it. Later they superimposed the monster in place of the curtain. At least I was shown pictures of the creatures that Ray had drawn, and he would direct the special effects scenes himself."

Her next film, *At The Earth's Core*, had her threatened by a lot of make-shift, full-sized prehistoric tat. "They used special wires for the flying sequences, and I was frightened they would knock me out as the creatures came flapping down at me." She enjoyed working with Peter Cushing. "He's very quiet and unspoiled, so unlike a star. I defy anybody who's met him to say a bad word about him." Next, she tried to finish off James Bond by shooting up his Lotus Elite car from her black helicopter in *The Spy Who Loved Me*. "It was one of my smallest parts, but my biggest career step," she said. "It was first class all the way."

She really owes her success to those Lamb's Navy Rum posters, which accidentally made her a pin-up with an identity that could be exploited in

"If I were the first actress to do a nude scene then it might be interesting. But I'm not!"

other media, and she has continued to do them for the last ten years, long after she has given up other modelling. She has always refused to do any nude scenes, and turned down *The World is Full of Married Men* and *Force Ten* from Navarone for that reason. "If I were the first actress to do a nude scene, then it might be interesting. But I'm not, so it wouldn't," she said. The success of *Starcrash*, a shoe-string Italian imitation of *Star Wars*, has given her some



popularity in America, where she gets a lot of that fan-mail from, sometimes addressed to "Dear Stella Star". What would she like to do now? "I'm grateful to fantasy. It's been good to me. But now I'd like to try something different, with something more of a character for me in it."

She has been quoted as saying that she had to work very hard to get her image right on camera, and that "I'm a very ordinary girl, really". What did she mean by that? "This image that I have, it's physical, but it's more mental with me. I know that I can do it in front

"I know I can't live up to my image. I know in photographs I can, because they lie..."

of a camera, because I can't do it in front of people. I can't. So therefore I don't know if I'd be any good on stage. If they had a camera down there," she laughs, thinking of the front row of the stalls, "maybe I could do it then. You know that you can be that image on screen, because that's the other self that comes out. You can be all the things that you're not really, so you know you can be what they want on screen, but you know you can't in real life." Even the physical effect of her posters does not give her confidence, because she does not feel she can live up to them personally. "Not at all", she affirms. "Not at all, I know I can't. I know in photographs I can, because they lie. Film lies, photographs lie. And I know I photograph okay, but in real life I can't be okay, but I hope that myself will come through and that will be accepted." Accepted instead of an image she is obliged to contradict. "You have this thing, like a monster, and then there's me, this shy person that can look okay, but it's not that thing they want to see, it's something else completely. It's my terrible twin" she says, and laughs a little. "She doesn't intrude in my private life at all, or with friends, as I think you can tell." Does she feel physically powerful, or sensual, when she is in front of a camera? A long pause. "Possibly in front of a camera, yes," she says with quiet reluctance. I would have been very surprised if she had said no. That's when she acts out her own fantasies with a script. It is curious to think that an insecure girl can become an actress in search of identity, and be rewarded by having hers split into two for her pains. It would seem that a theatrical solution is worse than the problem. But there is some security to be found on a fantastic level, creatively and anxiously, in having a larger than life self to play-act with. The attraction of acting. As far as Caroline's alter-ego is

concerned, the vamp has always belonged to early theatrical tradition rather than to reality. Plays and films always insured that the vamp was punished for her "vampishness" in the end. As times changed the character of the vamp survived in a modified, more credible form, as a convenient male fantasy.

Caroline Munro's dark looks have made her seem to be that character to the public. Far from being a predatory Amazon, she is a revitalisation of the English cliché, a shy, polite, nice girl. She finds the idea of the vamp unreal. "I've never met one," she says. And on reflection, you may agree.



Above: A scene from Caroline's first starring film, *Starcrash*, in which she played Stella Starr, a sort of intergalactic Red Sonja. Despite the shortcomings of the vehicle, *Starcrash* made enough to merit a sequel, *Star Patrol* is already in production and principle photography is due to begin in Italy some time in July 1980. Below left: A publicity still from the John Dark/Kevin Connor low budget prehistoric offering, *At the Earth's Core*. Below right: Another publicity portrait, this time from *The Spy Who Loved Me*.

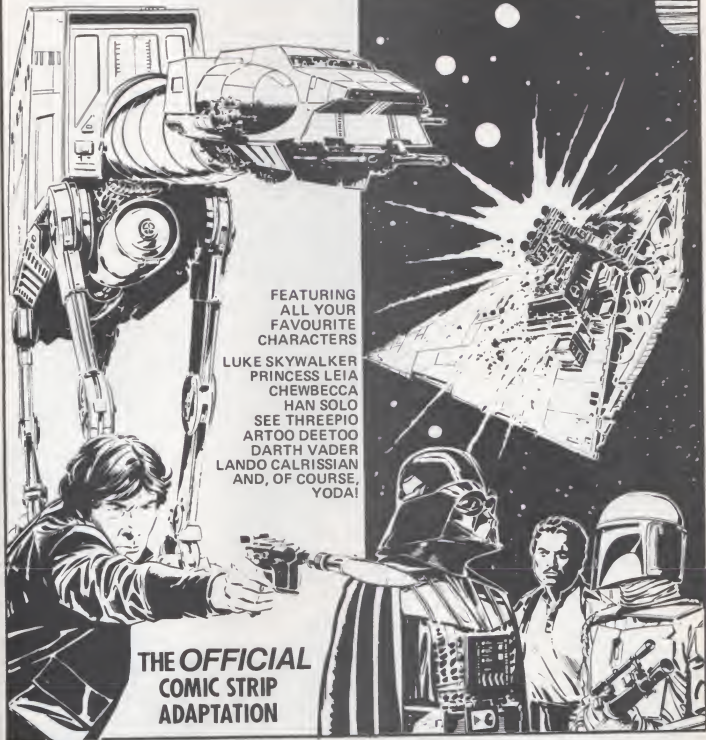


STAR ^{THE} EMPIRE STRIKES BACK ^{WARS} WEEKLY

THE ~~STAR WARS~~ SAGA CONTINUES

At last, Star Wars Weekly presents its adaptations of The Empire Strikes Back. Don't dare miss it!

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GERRY ANDERSON'S

STINGRAY

After his success with Supercar and Fireball XL5, Gerry Anderson stayed with science fiction but came back to Earth in a series about a futuristic submarine, *Stingray*, and its crew, Troy Tempest and Phones. Feature by John Fleming.

The Gerry Anderson team's first major television series was Supercar. The idea behind that was to avoid showing puppets walking. They didn't look right walking, so they were simply put in hovercars. *Stingray* was really an underwater Supercar. At least, that's what I thought, so I asked the man who worked closely with Anderson throughout his successful run of tv series, Reg Hill.

"Oh yes," he told me, "when you've made so many of those action-adventure films, it's rather like Tom Arnold: you've got to do everything on ice." So the Anderson team did an underwater series because it hadn't been done before.

The 39 episodes told the underwater adventures of Captain Troy Tempest and his hydrophone operator, Phones, as they fought an alien civilisation in their craft *Stingray*. They worked for the World Aquanaut Security Patrol (WASP), based at Marineville, a coastal command centre which could be submerged underground in an emergency. The WASP commander at Marineville was one Sam Shore. He and his men waged a constant war against the undersea kingdom of Titan and his scaley warriors, who travelled in submarines built like giant mechanical fish. In the opening episode Marina, Titan's beautiful mute slave-girl, defected to the WASP side. For the rest of the series, there was a bizarre and indecisive love sub-plot involving Troy, Marina and Sam Shore's daughter Atlanta.

Stingray was the first series Gerry Anderson made after his AP Films was

taken over by Lew Grade's ITC (see interview with Gerry Anderson in Starburst 8). It was also the first colour series shot for ITV. Reg Hill remembers: "Prior to that, ITC had made one or two pilot films in colour and, I think, when they found out what a whole series was going to cost, they backed down. But on *Stingray*, with the puppets and the sets and special effects and so on, the colour was fairly important. So we persuaded Lew it really was worth while." Shooting the series in colour also meant that it would be easier to sell in America.

Gerry Anderson says: "I remember Reg went to America to talk to NBC

Stingray, made in colour for the American market, was seen in black and white in Britain.

about all the problems of making a colour show. We had black-and-white television here and it was the first colour series to be made." (In fact, the BBC had colour and the completed *Stingray* pilot film was taken to the BBC on a pretext so that Anderson personnel could see what it looked like on a tv screen.)

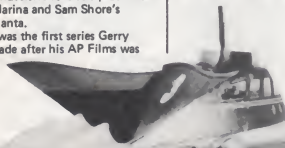
"In those days," says Reg Hill remembering his trip to America, "I found that colour television didn't differentiate between real pastel colours — whether they were beige or pink or slightly yellow, they'd all come out the same.

And if they were pale blue or pale green, it wouldn't distinguish. That's the only thing I found out about colour in America. It just meant we made things a little more colourful."

There was also the problem that *Stingray*, made in colour for the American market, would be seen in black-and-white at home in Britain. Effects man Derek Meddings told me: "We did have to be careful with certain tones, otherwise we lost the craft into the background. And the other thing, when we started to shoot in colour, was this tendency to make the sets too pretty — to make them red, white and blue to show *Look! This is a colour film!* I know I used to have little fights with Reg because he'd say *Put more colour in it, mate!* and I'd say *But Reg, we're down very deep and when you go down to the bottom of the ocean you don't see pretty yellow and red flowers.*"

This was a very minor effects problem, though. The central difficulty was that it is impossible to miniaturise water and a splash or wave will be out of scale with

Below: The title set of the series, *Stingray*. Opposite above: The king of the undersea race who wage war on the force of WASP. Opposite below: The headquarters of the World Aquanaut Security Patrol, Marineville.



the model craft on the surface. So how did Derek Meddings try to get over this?

"By designing the shots carefully," he told me. "You had to create a bow-wave at the front of the boat, you had to create a wash, then shoot it at very high speed (to make movement slower and therefore seemingly vaster) and hope you didn't get huge globules of water that would give the game away. If that happened, you couldn't shoot it again because the schedule was so tight — you just had to clip the shot so that it was a little shorter than it should have been."

Because of the time-scale, it was also impossible to shoot any scenes underwater, so Derek Meddings had to fake them with little money and a lot of ingenuity. He told me: "We built underwater landscapes which had to be thrown together with polystyrene, sand and plastic plants, then dirtied down. And I would paint a green backing that would disappear into the distance. For the foreground, I designed tanks which were about eight feet wide by four feet high and six inches from front to back."

The camera then shot the model *Stingray* in its fake underwater landscape through the six inches of water in the tank: "We used to have to put a vegetable dye in the water to take the quality down," says Meddings, "because sometimes, if we *didn't*, it was as if there was no water there. You've probably seen some of those films where you've got a submarine and, apart from a nice ripply

effect, it doesn't even look as if it's underwater. We used to put that ripply effect in by having a light in the top of the tank and just moving that water so we had rays of light moving."

The reason vegetable dyes were used, Meddings tells me, was so that the fish were not harmed: "We brought in hundreds of tiny little tropical fish. There would be something like 500 fish in the tank and sometimes we'd shoot with *Stingray* going through in the background and we wouldn't get *one* fish in the picture! They'd all be up the wrong end of the tank! I think it was Brian Johnson (see *Starburst* 9) who discovered the solution. When we fed the fish, we used to tap on the glass at the centre of the tank. So, just before we were going to do the take, we used to tap on the glass and all the fish used to rush to the centre of the tank hoping to be fed."

By the time the *Stingray* series was finished, the Meddings team had gained enough experience to handle the even greater problems to be faced on *Thunderbirds*.



THE ATOM-AGE MONSTERS

OR: "WE'VE TRIED EVERYTHING
AND NOTHING CAN STOP IT!"

Feature by Tise Vahimagi



"A thousand predatory tons of man-eating beast — hungering for human prey — the deadliest monster of all time — it's *The Deadly Mantis*."

"Crawling up from the depths — to terrify and torture — *The Monster that Challenged the World*."

"The sea's master-beast of the ages on a vengeance-mad rampage of terror — *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*."



Yes, it was compelling stuff like this that had the 1950s' movie audience "rushing in a frenzied rampage of terror" into the cinemas to check out such sterling titles as *It Came from Beneath the Sea*, *War of the Colossal Beast*, *Monster from Green Hell*, etc. Now, almost three decades later, with monster-fantasy movies somewhat more sophisticated, this form of advertising, the movie titles and some of the movies themselves are quite laughable.

However, what was it that captured the audiences' imagination? What was it that made ordinary folk shell out hard cash to see a movie featuring "a thousand predatory tons of man-eating beast?"

The answer is a short one: the anxiety-ridden years of the 1950s.

The "Cold" years of the '50s were a time of fear distrust and paranoia, a time when anything *unknown* was immediately regarded as evil.

If at first this fear of "outsiders" was directly linked to the American political machinations concerning the great Communist threat, then the subsequent fear of an atomic holocaust was related to the increased development and testing of the Atom bomb.

Some thirty years on, it is difficult to imagine the world-wide anxiety caused by the enormous scientific advance in the use of atomic energy and the potential dangers of nuclear power.

However, on the other side of the coin, film-makers were delighted with the subject from a viewpoint of source material. Alien invasions may come and go but man still creates his own devil with which to destroy himself. If science thus nuclear power, can destroy any alien intruders (in movie terms) then ultimately, it poses the greatest threat to man himself.

Science fiction film-makers during the 1950s not only made veiled attacks on the Bomb through their films but also

Top: *The Black Scorpion* (1957) takes on the might of the US Army courtesy of stop-motion wizard Willis O'Brien. Above: The poster for Jack Arnold's 1957 giant bug movie *Tarantula*. Opposite left: *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (1953). Opposite right: The German poster for *The Black Scorpion*.

created a powerful and frightening mythology around the use of it.

Testing of an A bomb (and later the H bomb) along with the cloud of radiation surrounding it became the core of this Hollywood mythology. One of the earliest examples was Warner Brothers' *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*, featuring a creature supposedly from the dinosaur age called a rhesosaurus.

Based on a Ray Bradbury short story (*The Foghorn*), the screenplay was penned by Lou Morheim (later to be story consultant on tv's *The Outer Limits*) and Fred Freiberger (later to be last-season producer on tv's *Star Trek*).

An atomic test in the frozen Arctic melts the age-old ice and frees a 140,000,000-year-old rhesosaurus. The animal, tremendous in size, is first seen by Professor Tom Nesbitt (played by Paul Christian) who is injured by an ice slide started by the monster, and found unconscious by his comrades, is flown to a New York hospital for treatment. Tom recovers, seeks Professor Thurgood Elson (Cecil Kellaway), a noted paleontologist.

Incredulous at first, Elson soon swings into action when he learns that the beast has destroyed a lighthouse on the Massachusetts shore. Plotting the monster's apparent course on a map, the professors theorise that it is coming down the coast to the Hudson subterranean

canyon off the New York coast. Surveying the undersea canyon in a diving bell, Elson is attacked by the rhesosaurus and killed. Later, the monster is reported surfacing in the East River and crawling on to the Fulton Street pier. People flee in panic. Automobiles and buildings are crushed as the beast advances. The monster is next seen when it turns up at the Coney Island amusement park and becomes entangled in the roller coaster structure, which collapses around it. Tom arrives to direct a troop of soldiers in firing a radio-active isotope from a grenade rifle into the beast. Finally surrounded by flames, the rhesosaurus rears up, then crashes to the ground.

Here we have the yardstick for most of the later, atomically-created monster movies of the '50s — atomic testing awakens a sleeping creature which then goes on a rampage through a major city and ends up getting zapped by the forces that, in effect, created it.

Beast from 20,000 Fathoms also showed that science was, by cause and effect, *Frankenstein* and its own monster all in one. If the atomic age created its own monsters, then it also helped destroy them.

No sooner had they cleared the rubble away after the Beast than it was time for *Them!* This time it was atomic testing in the New Mexico desert that brought

about fifteen-foot long mutant ants.

Ted Sheredman wrote the screenplay for *Them!*, from a story by George Worthing Yates (whose work also includes scripts for *It Came from Beneath the Sea*, *Earth vs The Flying Saucers* and *War of the Colossal Beast*).

Acting on a report received by the New Mexico police, Sergeant Ben Peterson (played by James Whitmore) sets out to find a little girl wandering through the desert in a state of shock. He comes upon a car and trailer, mysteriously wrecked. A general store a few miles down the road has been smashed up, and the storekeeper crushed. The only clues are the theft of sugar from both trailer and store, and a number of weird, huge foot or paw-prints. Dr Harold Medford (Edmund Gwenn), one of the world's most distinguished entomologists, and (naturally) his attractive scientist-daughter Joan Weldon are assigned to the case by the FBI. It is not long before the problem is solved. A giant species of ant who are (to quote the movie's ant expert) "a giant mutation, engendered by lingering radiation from the explosion of the first atomic bomb." The ants' nest is located and fumigated with poisonous gas. However, a search reveals that two queen ants have hatched and escaped, together with a number of winged males. Efforts must now be made to locate these



queens and destroy them before they can breed further. A prolonged search locates the surviving ants in the sewer system of Los Angeles. The army moves in and the ants are destroyed.

The climactic battle between the ants and the army in the Los Angeles storm drains is still one of the best action pieces to come out of the Giant Insect cycle. The film ends, however, with the ominous suggestion that further horrors may be breeding as a result of atomic experiments.

The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms and Them! are probably the best examples of the Atom Age Monster genre. Also, in setting the style and pattern for the others that followed, both films featured what would be the regulation lead characters: the dashing hero who solves the final, big problem (*Paul Christian/James Arness*), the second lead hero, who is also expendable (*Kenneth Tobey/James Whitmore*), the old scientist who happens to be an expert on whatever the monster is (*Cecil Kellaway/Edmund Gwenn*), and the scientist's daughter or pretty assistant (*Paula Raymond/Joan Weldon*).

Threats from the depths of the ocean were a popular format in the overgrown-

Twillinger (*Tim Holt*), head of the Naval Intelligence unit at the base and his assistant, Lt Bob Clemens (*Harlan Warde*). They find the patrol boat with little difficulty, with one of the seamen dead. Near his body is a strange, jelly-like substance. Twillinger takes the substance to the lab for analysis, suspecting that the water in the area may be radioactive. Dr Rogers (*Han Conrard*) denies this possibility but has his two assistants run constant Geiger checks on the sea floor. He agrees to run a check on the jelly to determine its origin. While at the lab, Twillinger meets Gail McKenzie (*Audrey Dalton*), Rogers'

secretary and her five-year-old daughter, Sandy (*Mimi Gibson*). Rogers' assistants, Blake (*Dennis McCarthy*) and Johns (*Casey Adams*), come upon a weird marine formation. It is a giant jelly-like sac and it is highly radioactive. Trying to loosen the sac, Blake's air tank becomes entangled and, as Johns tries to loosen him, a giant sea beast, with scaled body and protruding tusk-like mouth, darts for Blake, whose body, before Johns' eyes, begins to shrivel and age. In panic, Johns claws his way to the boat. Gail, returning to work that morning, is anxiously awaiting word from the men. Sandy goes

In It Came from Beneath the Sea, the overblown octopus, rampaging along the Pacific seaboard, just turns up, with no mention of radiation as the cause of the mutant species.

monster cycle. Perhaps the most well-known of these is *It Came from Beneath the Sea*, featuring a giant octopus rampaging along the Pacific seaboard. However, in *It Came from Beneath the Sea*, the overblown octopus just turns up as a general menace, with little mention of radiation as the cause of the mutant species. Attack of the Crab Monsters operates along similar lines, with its giant, mutant crabs creating havoc with those unfortunate enough to be near the water's edge.

One of the most interesting of this group, however, is *The Monster that Challenged the World*, scripted by Pat Fielder from a story by David Duncan.

Because of the natural isolation of the Salton Sea, the US Navy has set up a top research station where, under close scrutiny, they work with underwater demolition, guided missiles and overwater parachute tests. A parachute test outfit conducts the last routine jump of the day and two seamen await in a patrol boat to pick up the jumper who, soon after striking the water, completely disappeared. When the land radio at the Navy station fails to contact the patrol boat, the operator calls Lt Cmdr John



Above: The star of the film *Gorgo* (1960) makes short work of Tower Bridge. Below: Another star, another bridge. This time it is *It (the one that) Came from Beneath the Sea*.



into the lab room to look around when she starts screaming. Gail rushes into the lab and sees a creature, hatched from one of the eggs, blocking their only means of escape. They run into a small supply room. The creature relentlessly pushes against the barricade and its tusks are reaching in, almost touching them, when Rogers and Twillinger arrive. Twillinger, pushing Rogers outside for help, diverts the creature away with a fire extinguisher while Gail and Sandy escape. Twillinger wrenches the hose free from a live steam outlet and directs the hot blast at the screaming monster. Soon Rogers arrives

with the guards who kill the beast.

Sadly dated, like most of its contemporaries, *The Monster that Challenged the World* nevertheless manages to create a certain tension, a sense of excitement — even when there is none. The 1957 *Monthly Film Bulletin* review of the film cast an unusually favourable light: "Though conforming to some extent to the tried pattern, the idea is ingeniously and at times alarmingly worked out and the scientific supports sound reasonable. The monster, which at first sight seems an innocuous enough little creature, subsequently proves considerably more effec-

tive than most recent screen specimens."

The *Deadly Mantis* is another monster that surfaces from the ice of the Arctic and heads directly for the nearest big city. The film's best moments, and there are very few to choose from, come along in the earlier part when it's supposed to be a big mystery. What was it that destroyed an Arctic radar base? What monstrous thing ripped apart a cargo plane? Hero Craig Stevens later finds a strange claw-like object near some wreckage and, mentally reconstructing the claw's owner, builds himself a giant preying mantis.

Along with a bit of Cold War nonsense about the weaknesses of American radar defence, *The Deadly Mantis* plunges sharply downhill until at the conclusion not only are the lead characters relieved when the creature is finished off in the Holland Tunnel but so are most of the audience (those still awake, that is). Again, the *Monthly Film Bulletin* summed things up accordingly, stating in its review: "The creature's death agonies in the tunnel are sadistically prolonged; the rest of the film is scrappy and, with the mantis humming through the air at 200mph, laughable."

The Black Scorpion is a fine example of the late 1950s giant insect movie.

Giant wasps are the menace in *The Monster from Green Hell*; the result of exposure to cosmic rays, these mutant insects ravage Africa until a convenient volcanic eruption destroys them all. If *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* was a distant ancestor of *The Deadly Mantis* (in terms of plot and stock situations) then *The Monster from Green Hell*, along with *The Black Scorpion*, belongs with *Them!*

The Black Scorpion, however, is a fine example of the late-1950s giant insect movie. The special effects, for the most part, are above average and the action is thrillingly staged. The setting is Mexico, where a series of volcanic disturbances unleashes a nest of gigantic scorpions which then scour the countryside for food (aka cattle and humans), wrecking a train on the way.

This example of the giant bug cycle, though not a direct descendant of the atomically-created mutations, is nevertheless a relation, an off-shoot from the themes employed during the early-to-mid Fifties.

The climactic sequence in *The Black Scorpion*, where the grand-daddy of them all engages in a battle against tanks, armoured cars and helicopters is a minor triumph for this type of film. Naturally so, the special effects were directed by the master of mammoth monster movies, Willis O'Brien.



Above: A scene from *Them!* (1953). James Arness (who had appeared earlier as *The Thing from Another World* in 1951) takes potshots at one of the giant ants while Joan Weldon cowers in terror.



Another relative of The Black Scorpion-vein is Tarantula, featuring a monstrous version of the title species. With Tarantula, director Jack Arnold (to be profiled in next month's Starburst — Editor) completely reversed the usual settings and themes. Instead of a desolate Arctic landscape Arnold gives us a desert; instead of the monster causing havoc in a big city he lets it merely roam the wilderness. Its final destruction belongs purely to mainstream '50s sf cinema, but even that is outstanding. Author John Baxter (in his *Science Fiction in the*

Cinema) was among the first to note director Arnold's importance in the genre. Regarding the film's climactic moments, Baxter says: "In a remarkable final sequence among the most impressive in the field, the spider burns like a creature of straw as the jets wheel around it, pouring down napalm. No monster ever had a more spectacular burial."

So looking back, the dangers, both real and imaginary, during the dawn of the nuclear age became wonderful fodder for the '50s sf film-makers. The scientific threat was conveniently transformed into

some giant species of insect which could be destroyed eventually, thus eliminating the end-of-the-world anxiety.

These days the dangers of a nuclear holocaust are less imaginary and more likely, and the scriptwriters are now involved in getting away from it all. New worlds and new galaxies are the obvious forms of escapism from the real-life crises on Earth.

Now, if only the Soviet army could be transformed into a giant, mutant cockroach and an Afghanistan Kenneth Tobey emerged from the hills...

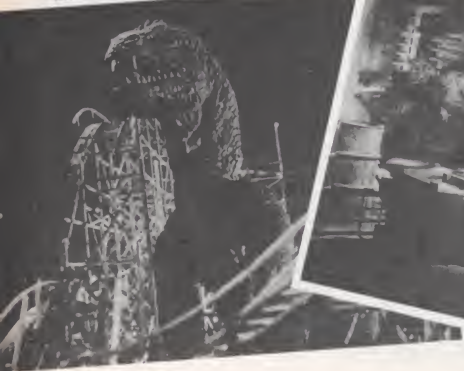
The dangers, both real and imaginary, became wonderful fodder for the 50s sf film-makers. The scientific threat was conveniently transformed into a giant species of insect which could be destroyed eventually, thus eliminating the end-of-the-world anxiety.



Left: The Deadly Mantis (1957) is finally brought down, crushing model cars in a model Holland tunnel as it falls.

Below left: The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms turns to face his pursuers, an amusement park forming an ironic backdrop to the creature's final destruction.

Below right: A soldier, armed with a flame thrower catches the mystery sugar thief red handed in Them!



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COLIN CHILVERS

Part Two: "How I began, where I'm going - and why"

Last month, Colin Chilvers - special mechanical effects supervisor and Oscar-winner for *Superman* - talked to Tony Crawley about his early career and his work on Lew Grade's *Saturn 3*. This month he explains how he started in the special effects game and gives some enticing glimpses of *Superman II*.



Shed No 6 at Pinewood Studios, in Berkshire, is a fairly dilapidated old building. Both inside and out it looks like a second home for Steptoe and Son. Wires and tubing lie about in heaps, plastic bodias are crumpled next to work-benches and oxy-acetylene torches. In a word, it's a mess. In reality, it's magic. The flying man logo on the outside holds the clue. This is where Colin Chilvers and his special effects team work out the kind of trickery that wins them Oscars for *Superman*. Shed No 6, in fact, is like Merlin's Cave.

Up the rickety stairs, in a first-floor office, is the young, bearded and bespectacled Merlin himself: Colin Chilvers, 35 this year, and at the very pinnacle of his career. He's warm, friendly, affable. And why ever not? He has the world at his feet at the moment.

Once he realised there was such a job, all Colin Chilvers ever wanted to do in life was work in special effects on films. And work his way to the top. That he has accomplished in exceedingly rapid order. From lowly assistant to Oscar-winner in ten years.

But where, he quite naturally asks, does he go from here...?

The product from his intriguing office-computer system provides an answer. It's a publicity handout, typed, set and printed by his computer, detailing his plans for the new gold-rush film-making area of Canada. And he's taking a trio of award-winning colleagues with him: Martin Gutteridge from *Silver Dream*, Racer and Dracula; Roy Whybrow, who has worked on almost everything from *Help!* to *Lawrence of Arabia*; and optical genius Roy Field, another of the *Superman* Oscar-winners.

Such a departure is far from good news for the British film industry. But as The Duke used to put it, A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do. And Chilvers for one is refusing to stagnate.

In this second instalment of the Starburst conversation with Colin Chilvers, he outlines how he fought all the necessary battles to get into the movie game - having first qualified for his intended career by studying engineering and industrial design at the Hornsey College of Art in London. And, therefore, how you, too, could follow his lead... if you've the interest, the talent and the singleminded determination that has to go with it.

Since completing *Saturn 3* (covered at length last issue), Chilvers has, of course, been toiling merrily away on *Superman II*. Not a man to give away too many of the secrets of his particular trade, he kept a closed mouth on the sequel. He did, however, suggest, that even after his famous helicopter sequence in the first film, we ain't, as they say, seen nothin' yet!

There is, for example, a highly complex setpiece this time... "my most challenging effect - the battle of Metropolis". The mind boggles, though we'll have to wait a few months more...

The eye was similarly boggling when he took us on the *Superman II* set - which proved to be the observation platform atop the Eiffel Tower, with Paris

Painted all around and below it in a giant backdrop. Richard Lester's bald head was (just about) in evidence as he prepared to shoot Scene 488 - Take 3. Any day now, Supie-fans...

As all the recent movies - and indeed Oscars - have proved, British special-effects are the best in the world. Certainly the most in demand. Why is that? Varied reasons... One, I think is that the States tended not to encourage young people. When the film industry went through a depression over there, all the older ones were careful for their jobs. There weren't many technicians around and not enough jobs, so there was no influx of younger people. Then the film industry moved over here to a large extent, because we were cheaper. The American producers used to import American effects men. We had a few of our own, but I have to say the Americans are still the best. They have the dancers, they've got the technology - and the experience. I trained with one of them, so I know what I'm talking about...

Two of the big reasons for Americans making movies in England then, is the fact that we're cheap, or were cheaper - still cheap anyway - and secondly, that



we speak English. American producers and directors like talking to somebody direct, and not through an interpreter. Silly reason as it may sound, it's surprisingly important.

But now the Hollywood film-makers don't bring their own wizards over. They use you and others like you. How did we convince them we're so hot?

Because we didn't have the American money over here, we had to be far more inventive and make far more use of the money we did have available. I've said this before and I still believe it: The Americans are good, very good, at sets and effects, but they're not as inventive as we are. They're not into string and candlewax!

Simple question: How's Superman II?

Simple answer: Very well. We've nearly finished. *[Chilvers' work was complete on January 10]*

But not so simple work? Or was it easier the second time around?

Oh yes. A lot of the work had been done on Part One, when we had the major sets — The Krypton sets, the Oval Office *[the President's office in the White House]*, stuff like that. I suppose when you look back at Part One, a lot of our effort had been research and development.

What can we expect from Two then. With all the stories about money problems, a change in directors, nearly starting too late and losing too many of the technicians to Flash Gordon and The Empire Strikes Back, the rumour was put around — and by me more than anyone — that the new movie would finish up as rough 'n' ready Superman 1½.

More like 2½! I think the company is committed to making Superman 25! They've bought the rights for 25 years and I can't see it's in their interest to make a quick rip-off sequel. If they did that, they'd lose the market for the rest of the time. And they're due to start Superman III in December.

But did the Salkinds lose any of their first crew?

They retained the top technicians from Part One and, of course, the actors. But at the time you said it, it was true. They weren't making up their minds when they wanted to start. Take me, for instance. I'm not an individual as a special effects department. I'm me. But I'm me plus my crew. Okay, maybe I earn enough money that I can afford to have six weeks off and not really worry about it too much. But certainly some of my crew, and the lesser-paid members of my crew, are like workers anywhere else. They want to keep continuity of work.

So if you're not working, they're not working. How many people depend on you?

At the moment, I've got sixteen people working for me. Like me, they're all freelances. Over a period of years, you get to like one another and you get to know one



Opposite below: Lois Lane (Margo Kidder) dangles precariously from the wrecked helicopter in Superman The Movie. Chilvers was responsible for the whole helicopter sequence. This page: Some superb flying sequences from the same film. Above: Superman (Christopher Reeve) flew by means of a harness, concealed beneath his cloak. Below: The front projection sequences involved Zoran Perisec's zoom process, to be more fully explored in next month's Starburst.



Miller is going to get a job. I know it. I think it was a week later, I got a box of Swiss chocolates from him, thanking me. *What would the movies be like in Canada?*

Not so vast as the ones over here, which means maybe I could do two or three movies a year instead of one. So I could space myself out a bit and have a week off inbetween. They have hard winters, where they don't do a lot of shooting, which means either I'll have to go to another country to work or I'm forced not to work — which would not worry me. You get to a stage when you think: Why do I need to earn a fortune? I suppose being a special effects supervisor with the fair amount of money you earn, you're not rich and you're not poor. You're a good stab target for the tax man because he can get 60% off you, but you're not earning £1-million a year to allow you to live in luxury anyway — you're not on the breadline.

Would you accept a job on some Italian space rip-off number, though? Their effects are chronic if not comic.

I'll talk to anyone... I've always had the

attitude, even if I can't do it, it's in my interest to try and help them. You never know when you might need them. You can't be too complacent about your position. I'm being offered a lot of movies. I've got an Academy Award, which means that when I ring up any producer he'll talk to me, if he hasn't heard of me, he's heard of Oscar... so now is the time when I can try and use my ability, my known name in special effects and an Oscar and see what I can do with it.

Are the people who call you these days, only interested in space movie effects? I realise this is blasphemous to say in Starburst, but aren't you a little tired of space films at the moment?

Well, it is getting a bit monotonous. There was a film that was going to be made last year by Ken Russell, which was going to be a space rock opera. Rather like Tommy. I would have loved to have done that. Because it's getting away from the usual. There have been too many movies lately trying to make space look like it might be... Ken Russell would have gone off into the real fantasy. And

that's the sort of impression one gets in the film industry at the moment, that the next stage is not going back to kitchen sink dramas or sex, but it's going to be

When I was going to start *Superman*, the film that collapsed around me was called *Vampirella*.

fantasy. Hence John Boorman's *Merlin* and Ridley Scott's *Knight*.

Is there one area you're waiting to tackle?

You have to be prepared to do anything. In *Tommy*, it was action-props. In *Lisztomania*, it was blowing things up... *Did you supply Ann-Margaret's beans in Tommy?*

No, all I did was Tina Turner's Acid Queen sequence. That's one of the reasons Ken asked me to do the rock space opera idea which he was planning before he went off to the States on *Altered States*. I can't remember the title, but believe me, it would have been mind-blowing.

The films we've missed!

When I think back to when I was going to start *Superman*, the film that collapsed around me at the time I was working on it, was *Vampirella*. That would have been a good movie, too, and it would certainly have been the right timing. That's the strange thing, though. Everyone said, "Oh, it's useless, *Vampirella* — because it's science fiction and comic-book and it's not going to be any good." Since then, the producer must have kicked himself... from here to the poor-house!

Footnote: Since this interview took place, Colin Chilvers has made up his mind about which of those six film offers to accept. With his team, he selected the next big all-action Disney number, *Condorman*. This stars Michael Crawford (minus Betty and beret) as a comic book writer who takes on the identity of his superhero character when trying to help a Russian girl spy defecting to the West. Raquel Welch refused the role; Charles Jarrott is directing in Switzerland and France. Although based in Europe it's a Hollywood production and will be completed in Film City. "I've been looking forward to going there again," comments Colin. "I went over to the Disney studios in January and met some of the effects boys there, some I knew and the others have become friends. Let's face it, when all is said and done, Hollywood is the centre of the film industry and I suppose that's another ambition to be fulfilled. One has to work there to really think that one has arrived."

Next month: Zoran Perisec, the man whose Zoptic process contributed so much to the *Superman* flying scenes.



another -- almost like a family. If I take another guy on to my crew and he doesn't fit in with the rest, he doesn't do another film with me. I look upon my

"When I left art college all I wanted to be was a supervisor and, of course, to win an Academy Award."

crew as a family. They have to work together.

When you're faced, as you were recently, with a choice of six high-class movies, do you discuss them all with your crew?

You have to. Of the six movies, some were shooting abroad. Not all the crew like to go abroad. They've got wives, and kids growing up, and so on. But as I say, I've got my own life to lead as well. I can't let myself stagnate. I have to move on. When I left art college all I wanted to be was a special-effects assistant, then I wanted to be a supervisor and, of course, to win an Academy Award. Now I've done all that by the time I'm 34. Now either I spend the rest of my life as an effects man, and there's only one way to go in that respect with all the youngsters coming up all the time -- and that is down! Or I look elsewhere and see if I can expand my ambitions into other areas within films.

You seem to be in the odd position of having achieved your ambitions almost too rapidly. Am I right?

Totally. Absolutely! And that leaves you in a void . . . One of the great, great things about the film industry, more than any other industry I can think of, is one can start at the bottom and the world's your oyster. If you've got enough talent, determination and luck -- probably in that order -- you can make it. I started at 19, coming from a completely non-film industry family, a totally working-class family, and if I hadn't got into films I would have been a telephone engineer, I suppose, something like that.

What led you into special-effects?

I dunno. Really I don't. It was just an unusual creative thing. I was always, as a kid, getting told off for taking things apart, cutting up bangers and making explosives, all that kind of thing was natural to me. When I went to see films, I didn't know what special-effects were.

How did you begin?

When I left school, I wanted to be a special-effects assistant. It took me a year and a half to get a job, any kind of job, in the industry, just touting around seeing people. Totally depressing! I only got into films in the end because somebody took pity on me and realised that I wasn't going to give up. I got my union ticket, which is the all-important thing, by starting off as a trainee animation director. That was the way in, how I got

my foot in the door. I might have been well-suited to that job, because in a way it's special-effects, but I hated it, sitting behind a drawing board all day. I quickly moved on from there. I was employed, ironically enough, by two guys . . . one was the American special effects man, Glen Robinson, who has just finished *Flash Gordon* -- the other was Hugh Attwooll, who is associate producer on the Disney film *I'm about to do, Condorman*; that'll be the first time I've worked for him in the twelve years since he got me started. I trained with Glen Robinson for a year and a half -- on *The Battle of Britain* (1970). That wasn't an official training, but we liked each other -- we're great friends now -- and I kept my eyes open, which as he told me, is how you learn in this business. There is no organised training scheme you see.

Which means similarly-minded youngsters are now knocking on your door, I suppose?

Since *Star Wars*, yeah . . . A lot of them have a very naive view about what a special effect is, though. They don't realise it's hard work. Let's face it, you don't get to do good effects unless you

work bloody hard! A lot of kids think they can just drop into it . . . I've had lots come to see me, and I've employed some who have been totally useless.

No one worthwhile at all?

Well, a young kid came to see me about six, seven months ago, a New Yorker working for Warner Brothers' record department, who'd been trying to get into films for a long time. And I could tell he was totally committed. He had something about him that reminded me of me at his age, so I felt I had to help him. I took him over to meet Glen Robinson on *Flash Gordon*. Glen gave him some contacts in Los Angeles. He was over-awed by Glen, because he has done so many big movies like *Earthquake* and *King Kong*. When I took him back to Uxbridge station (he had flown over from Switzerland for the day to meet Glen and myself), this kid said, "How can I repay you . . . you've spent so much time and energy on me, I don't know what I can ever do to pay you." I told him: "Just get a job. I've done my bit. You are me 15 years ago, now get a job. That's all the payment I need, because I know you want to do it." Whatever happens young



An interesting sequence of photos from the opening scenes of *Superman The Movie*. The mechanical effects of buildings collapsing and the take-off of the capsule bearing the baby Kal-El (above) were all supervised by Chilvers.



STARBURST

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Sixteen months in the making! Starburst finally presents the Voting Ballot for the 1980 *Starburst Fantasy Awards*. Because of the delay in getting this year's Awards together we've had to alter the procedure slightly, so settle back and pay attention.

To be eligible for the 1980 Awards, the film or tv show must have gone on general release between January 1st 1979 and June 30th 1980. That is an

eighteen month span. The reason for this is so that the awards can cover both the summer and the Christmas releases in any one year. (Next year's Awards will cover the period between July 1st 1980 and June 30th 1981 — simple, no?)

Another change from the last Awards is that we have decided to include fewer categories. This is an attempt on our part to alleviate the confusion that last year's twenty categories caused.

After much debate we decided

to add one new category: that of *Best Fantasy Book*. When voting for this category, please bear in mind that the book needn't be a film book to qualify. But it must be fantasy orientated and it must have been issued in Britain for the first time between January 1st 1979 and June 30th 1980.

If you are reluctant to cut up your copy of *Starburst*, then a copy of this page will be sufficient. Please get your votes to us as quickly as possible.

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- Best Film.....
- Best Actor.....
- Best Actress.....
- Best Director.....
- Best Script.....
- Best Special Effects.....

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- Best Television Show.....
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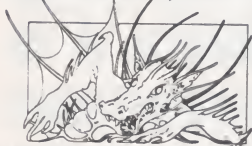


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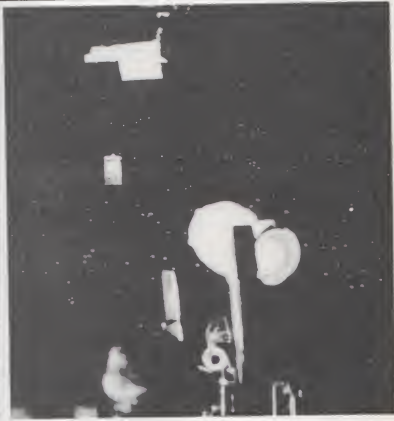
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IRVINE ON EFFECTS

PART FOUR FILMING AND TAPING

Through this series we have dealt with the basic concepts of miniatures; the design criteria and the methods of construction. All this has been building up to one objective — consigning an image to some medium for posterity. However, due to space restrictions it is impossible to cover every aspect of the art in one article — we can only just begin to scratch the surface. *Mat Irvine.*



Above left: The model of the Nova Queen (from Blake's 7) is hung on wires for filming. The camera can just be made out on the left hand side while the video viewfinder can be seen at the foot of the picture. Above right: An example of the triple exposure technique (Doctor Who, The TARDIS, the Egg and the stars) — was added as a separate exposure. The film camera is an Ariflex SR.

To date there are two means by which a moving picture can be preserved. One is photographically on film and the other is electronically on video tape. And until moving holograms come into everyday use, these are the only two methods we have. The techniques for recording miniatures are approximately the same whether one is putting the result onto film or tape. Television can involve the use of both film and electronic recording, but feature films have only occasionally been made on video tape.

(The video method of making films is usually quicker to shoot and edit, but the process to transfer it to film is expensive and not completely satisfactory. However, new systems exploring the use of thousands of lines to a picture — the standard tv picture is 625 lines in Europe and 525 in the US — are being developed

which may possibly result in more video work for feature films).

Although there are major differences between the types of equipment one uses depending on whether you are working on films or tape, there are a few very basic rules applying to both media that have grown up over the years when it comes to shooting miniatures.

Firstly, *movement*. Bearing in mind that one is creating an illusion and invariably making something appear larger than it actually is, the speed a model moves will undoubtedly be wrong to the size it is intended to be. Consequently the technique of shooting the model at a higher camera speed than its final projection speed has developed. This gives the double advantage of slowing down the overall movement of the model to make it appear more realistic and also to lengthen the total time of the shot, which

is normally an advantage. In some ways this method has been superceded by computer-controlled cameras which can perform delicate manoeuvres slowly, yet smoothly, but the system has not disappeared entirely.

Secondly, *lenses*. As a general rule of thumb, the smaller the miniature, the wider the angle of lens one uses to give the correct perspective and an adequate depth of field.

Finally, *angles*. This particularly applies to miniature sets. Bearing in mind that most full-size viewing is done at the human height of 5' 8", if a film is being shot of a model landscape, this factor should be borne in mind when positioning the camera. It invariably means the camera ends up resting on the surface of the model base. This will also increase the depth of field illusion as the front-to-back depth of the model will be

far narrower than the full size set it is representing.

A miniature scene can be shot in one take, though few still are. It has the advantage that everything can be seen through the viewfinder and that it all ends up on the same final film (the first generation) which is not the case where one involves opticals. But the main disadvantage is that with most space shots the light levels are very low and this, coupled with high camera speeds, makes getting the image onto the film very difficult. (Doubling the speed that the film travels through the gate of the camera means that the exposure is halved. Consequently either the aperture has to be widened, which reduces the depth of field, or the lighting level has to be increased. All in all you can't win!)

However for simple shots, or where time is of the utmost importance, this method still has its uses. A large black paper background, punched with holes for stars and back-lit, has planets, ships or whatever arranged in front. Support poles can emerge through the backing, or craft can be suspended on very thin wires. Keeping this lot in focus is one of the prime problems, so these days it is more common to introduce some kind of matte into miniature effects work.

All *matte* means is *mask* and whatever form the process takes it will involve putting two, or more, pictures together on one frame. At its very simplest, one half of a film can be masked off whilst in the camera. The film is then exposed, the film re-wound, the exposed half masked and the originally masked half exposed. An extension of this is a quick and effective way of putting stars into space shots. Using the fact that space is black alleviates the necessity of putting a mask in the camera, the film will not be exposed anyway. By noting where, say, a spaceship travels through the frame (either by an effects grid in the camera or a video viewfinder), the stars can be put on by a second exposure, having re-wound the film, by noting where the craft has not travelled. This was the method used in *Space: 1999* and several Blake's 7 episodes. It has the disadvantage that once one is in the know, it is invariably easy to spot this method, for one tends to get an obviously black area where the model is going to travel. However, as with the all-in-one method one does end up with one 1st generation piece of film.

Another method to put a background behind a model is by projection. Back projection is self-explanatory and is little used these days. More versatile is Front Axial Projection or FAP. Here the backing is projected, as suggested by the name, on the front of a screen, which gives a much brighter, cleaner image. However, two problems arise.

Firstly, whatever object is in foreground is going to cast a shadow on the

screen and secondly the projected image is going to show up on this foreground subject. The first problem is solved by projecting through a half-silvered mirror exactly down the axis of the film camera — hence the use of the term "Axial". There is still a shadow, but it is hidden by the foreground model.

The second problem of the image appearing on the model is removed by projecting a very low intensity of light, only about 20%, and by using a very highly reflective screen. These FAP screens reflect back about 90% of the light received, and the nearest everyday objects to compare them with are reflective numberplates and road-signs. In reality part of the projected image does fall on the foreground, but it is of a very low intensity.

FAP is an efficient method for completing a large number of shots relatively quickly and both still and moving pictures can be projected.

Examples of where this method was used were the opening sequence of 2001, *Superman* and the second series of

Blake's 7. The *Superman* sequence introduced an extension of FAP by employing the Zoptic method of a double zoom, where not only the camera, but also the projector were fitted with zoom lenses. (Though the first public look at the system, even if they didn't know it at the time, was on the *Tomorrow's World* special — *Tomorrow's Universe* in 1977).

FAP can also be used to combine artwork and foreground subjects, by converting the painting to a transparency and projecting it. In effect, it is a simple form of matte artwork, and this has been a standard method in the film industry for as long as there has been a film industry. Even in these days of enormous film budgets, building complete sets on a grand scale is still impractical. So the bits that are missing can be filled in with a matte painting.

One type is the foreground glass, where one can either add, or for that matter blot out, part of a shot. For example the lower part of a rocket pad could be built in full size, so that the cast would be seen in relation to it, and the



Above: Miniature model filming on 35mm for the *Doctor Who* story *City of Death*.

upper half could be painted on a sheet of glass. This is then positioned in front of the camera and the two images lined up exactly. It is a useful technique but does have a few disadvantages. The camera position is fixed, one needs a great depth of field and the lighting on the painting has to match the full-size set. The latter problem can be circumvented by using a miniature instead of the art-work, (known as a foreground model, or a hanging miniature), where the lighting will change to match the background.

Matte artwork has a different side which also involves probably the most versatile of all film effects processes — the Travelling Matte.

In very simple terms, the basis of Travelling Matte is formed from four pieces of film — the two originals you wish to combine and the two mattes that will allow you to do it. The whole process has to be executed with the pieces of film in exact register, for they have to line up exactly for the process to work. 16mm is really out as far as the Travelling Matte is concerned and even 35mm works best in



Above: From the BBC tv series *Doctor Who* (the episode, for completists, is *The Masque of Mandragora*). A model and a full-size TARDIS in the electronic studio. The camera is mounted on an arm and both versions of the TARDIS stand before a green CSO screen.

the Vista-Vision format (ie sideways). The whole idea goes back to the first principles in that you mask off one area of the film so that it isn't exposed until you want it to be. The exposed area is then itself masked and the second image exposed onto the remainder of the film. Referring to the diagram on the following page, suppose we want to put the model spaceship on film A in orbit around the planet on film B. What we need are films C and D, the masks, one a positive and the other a negative. C is fully exposed, ie opaque in the black areas, and clear where it follows the outline of the ship. D is exactly the opposite. If in an optical printer, you sandwich films D and B, with E the final print film, you will end up with film B printed, minus the unexposed area that corresponds to the opaque part of film D — the outline of the model. It is now quite easy

to see if you repeat the process using films A and C sandwiched against E, as long as everything is in exact registration — and that is the most important factor — the second run will expose film A, while the mask film C prevents re-exposure of the background film B, run through the first time.

The whole process can be repeated, in theory, as many times as required, although there is the problem of a degradation in quality with several generations of prints.

The other main problem with Travelling Mattes, is producing the matte in the first place. The best mattes are still hand-painted. Obviously it takes an incredible amount of time but the result is virtually flawless, and this is how the matting was done for 2001. However even with the vast amounts spent on effects films these days, time is still at a

premium and so a faster method was developed — the Blue Screen Process. This has a common link, in theory at least, with the electronic process that goes under several names, but which is most commonly known in Britain as Colour Separation Overlay (CSO) or in the US as Chromakey.

Whichever name you choose, the idea is the same as Blue Screening. Simply shoot your subject against a coloured background (it does not have to be blue) and as long as this colour is absent from the foreground, when the film is processed wherever the background colour appears, this can be used to make one of the masks, i.e. the Travelling Matte film. The procedure is not as perfect as the hand-painted mattes as fringing can be a problem around the outline of the subject, usually due to stray light from the background falling on the foreground or by the films being slightly out of register.

With television, the background colour is not used to make a physical matte as in the film sense, rather it is an electronic switch, switching a picture from another source in and out literally for every frame scanned by the television tube. Fringing can also occur but tv has the benefits of modern electronics and fringe eliminators to alleviate the problem to a great extent.

However the matte is produced, the fact that the spaceship (to stay with the genre) is not being filmed or taped against a "real" background has brought about the current convention of moving the camera, not the model. This has the great advantage that the model can be locked off securely on a support and avoid the use of wires and their inevitable roll, pitch and yaw movement. Once the shot is combined with the background it is of no matter if the model moved in relation to the camera or vice versa, the eye will interpret it the same way. What is not so satisfactory is to use

a zoom lens to produce the movement for unless it is directly towards or away from the camera perspective always tends to look wrong.

As indicated earlier, Matte Paintings can also be used in conjunction with Travelling Matte, with The Black Hole being the most famous recent example. The live action sequences are back-projected onto the glass and the matte artist will paint the artwork to line up exactly. The two images are combined later in an optical printer. In addition the modern computer controlled cameras, such as Disney Studios' ACES, now allow movement on mattes to be accurately reproduced, so instead of the lock-off camera shot that was usual with a foreground glass, the final scene on the film can have panning, tilting, tracking and crabbing shots as if the whole set had been built.

Most film effects have their electronic counterparts. As has already been described, CSO is the equivalent of Travelling Matte. Simple mattes have their counterparts in the Inlay Desk which working through a black and white camera produces non-moving masks. Even FAP can be used with a tv camera.

However one aspect that cannot be reproduced in television is the ability for a film camera to run at a high speed. Shooting any miniature set or model that involves movement it is quite common to be running the film camera at twice, three times or even more, the normal speed of 24 frames per second for film, 25fps for tv. In fact, 5 times speed (120fps) is quite normal for some 35mm film cameras and there is one 16mm camera that will turn up to 500fps, which is 20 times normal speed and is very useful for filming miniature explosions.

Video cannot, as yet, do this. Even though video recorders can run at faster speeds, this is not the only criterion that determines the picture speed. This is controlled by the scanning speed of the tv camera and no matter at what speed the

recorder runs, the scanning speed is constant. All one can do is use one of the devices such as a video disc to slow the image down, but this is not satisfactory as it always looks like a video disc picture and the slower it gets the more stop-motion it becomes. The newer generation of video discs are apparently better, but whether they will match the versatility of a high speed camera, we will have to wait and see.

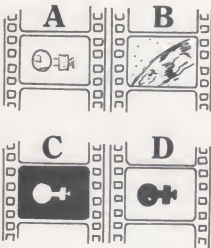
However, all is not lost with electronic recording, for as good as film is, one still has to wait for rushes to see if it's all come out and if one is involving any sort of optical work, usually a lot longer while it is sorted out at the labs. These days a video-viewfinder (a miniature tv camera) fitted in line with the camera eye-piece can produce the image on a monitor, which of course can also be recorded, but this can only be used for composition, not as a quality indicator. With a television studio the results can be seen immediately and if they are not correct one can, hopefully, go back and do it again. Digital effects generators, such as the Quantel, can give you all the tricks available on film, but very much quicker. The picture can be zoomed in and out, mixed squeezed and flipped over and over. This is in addition to the normal array of switching devices available in most modern studios which perform simple actions such as wipes, dissolves and superimpositions and more complicated ones such as four way CSO switching at the same time!

My personal summing up of the difference in working in films or tv is that film is comparatively cheap to set up, but starts to become extremely expensive once optics are involved. An electronic studio is very expensive to equip, but once done it is comparatively simple and cheap to do the effects, by flicking a few switches.

(A note to my colleagues, the Electronic Effects Operators. I know I've oversimplified the procedure, so no Internal Memos please!)

As I lamented at the beginning, there is no possible way to include all types of effects in just one article, even if I had had the whole of this issue of Starburst to myself, I still would only just have been able to begin to scratch the surface.

For further reading, Focal Press publish a whole series of books that deal with effects, including specific titles on Special Effects Techniques in Television, Films and on Opticals. *American Cinematographer* invariably carries a new sf film with a major article. They have had issues devoted to Star Wars, Close Encounters, Alien, Star Trek and The Black Hole. *Cinefantastique* have also recently done a very good double issue on the latter, numbered Vol 9 no3/4.



This diagram explains the basic principles of the travelling matte.

Left: An example of CSO (Colour Separation Overlay) in action. Note the monitor in the foreground showing the final composite picture. From the Doctor Who story The Face of Evil. Below: This ship was used in the Doctor Who segment The Stones of Blood. Though the background is actually a Colour Separation Overlay, it could equally be used for the Blue Screen process. Bottom: FAP (Front Axial Projection) at work. The 35mm projection film can be seen at centre, the film camera at the top, the videoviewfinder monitor on the far right. The box on the left is the projector control. The Blake's 7 Liberator hangs in front of the FAP screen at the far left of the picture.





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